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THE

MANDARIN'S DAUGHTER

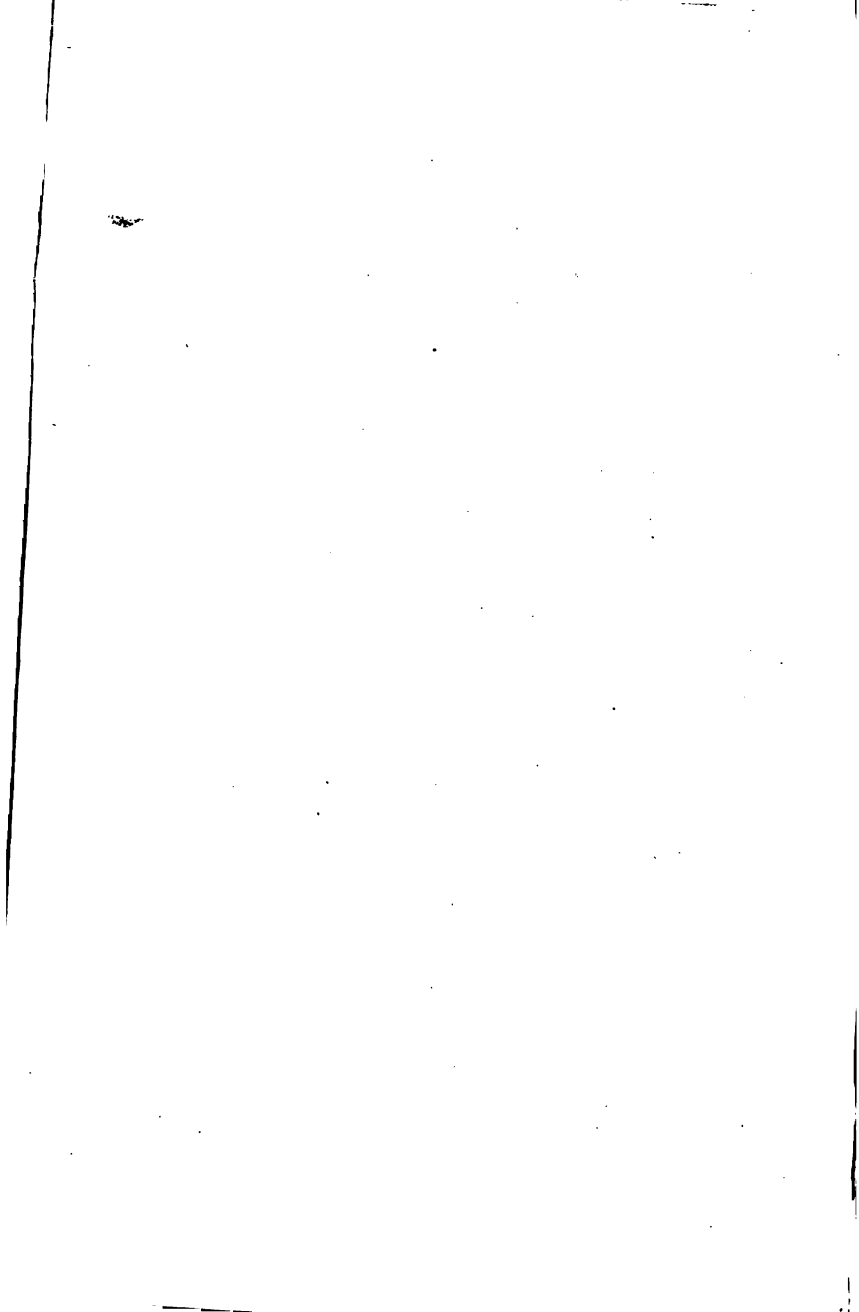


SAMUEL MOSSMAN



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VICTORIA HARBOUR, HONG KONG.

THE
MANDARIN'S DAUGHTER:

A STORY OF THE GREAT TAIPING REBELLION,

AND

GORDON'S "EVER-VICTORIOUS ARMY."

BY

SAMUEL MOSSMAN,

AUTHOR OF

"CHINA: A BRIEF ACCOUNT OF THE COUNTRY; ITS INHABITANTS, AND THEIR
INSTITUTIONS;" "NEW JAPAN: THE LAND OF THE RISING SUN," ETC.

WITH NUMEROUS ILLUSTRATIONS.



LONDON:
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PREFACE.

IN the form of a personal narrative, assumed to be related by a Sergeant of the Royal Engineer Corps, the following story is illustrative of the success of British Arms in China, not only in defeating the Imperial Army, but assisting in crushing the great Taiping Rebellion, through the generalship of Colonel Gordon, R.E., who commanded the Chinese Disciplined Force, designated "The Ever-Victorious Army." Where the salient points of these memorable events are narrated, the facts recorded in their history are strictly adhered to ; so also are the secondary features of the narrative, in describing the customs and manners of the Chinese—consequently the amount of fiction is infinitesimal. To the rising generation these pages will convey a truthful account of the most gigantic insurrection and foreign war that ever occurred in that disturbed empire, from 1858 to 1863, when they were too young to appreciate the importance of those events in relation with this country. Among adult readers who remember the

devastating progress of the Taiping Rebellion, in the hope that it might have been the means of regenerating China, through the spread of Christianity, the story will be found interesting. The Tale having originally appeared in the "Leisure Hour," is a guarantee of the subject-matter being suitable to the tastes of the most fastidious class of readers, and it has since then been considerably enlarged and carefully revised.

SAMUEL MOSSMAN.

LONDON, *October*, 1875.

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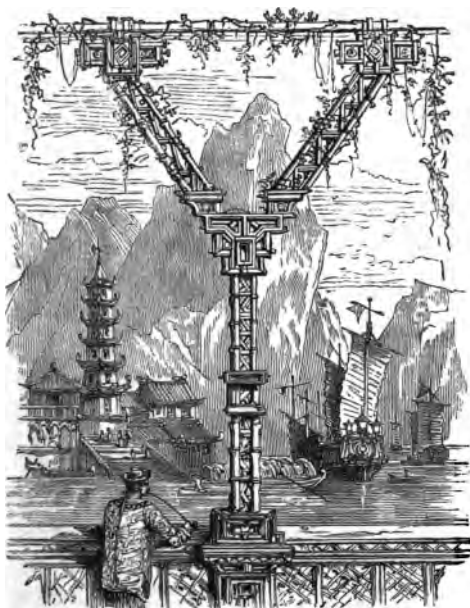
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THE MANDARIN'S DAUGHTER.

CHAPTER I.

A Chinese Passenger Ship with lucky diggers from Australia.—Party of Royal Engineers on board.—Freights of gold, coffins, and human bones.—Chinese modes of cooking and eating.



YOU may wonder how I came to enter the service of the Emperor of China, and to marry a mandarin's daughter. It is a long story, but the outline of it may be worth telling, especially as my own adventures were mixed up with events which will ever be memorable in history.

When the last Chinese war broke out, all available British forces

were ordered to join the army and fleet assembling at Hong Kong. Engineers, artillery, and regiments of the line sailed from England for the far East; native cavalry and infantry were dispatched from India; and even the Australian colonies were called upon to supply their small contingents. At that time I was at Melbourne, a sergeant in the Royal Engineers, in command of some twenty sappers and miners, and, in obedience to orders, took passage by the first vessel leaving for China, a Danish ship named Jupiter, which was about to sail with two hundred Chinese passengers, returning to their native land with the proceeds of their labour at the Ballarat gold-fields.

We went on board at the Sandridge pier, where a number of colonists had assembled to witness the departure of the heathen diggers, who were detested by the people generally; and many strong epithets were levelled at them by the roughs, but these, not being understood, fell harmless on their ears. Even when some fellow administered a kick, John Chinaman would take it good-naturedly, and rubbing the assaulted place, would grin a "Chin! Chin!" as if he had only received a friendly good-by. To do them justice, there was less trouble in embarking these two hundred Chinamen than there would have been with one-fourth that number of European passengers. They walked on board peaceably in single file, and were soon stowed away in their berths between decks.

The shades of evening set in by the time the Jupiter was fairly under way, and then arose great commotion amongst the passengers, who had all come on deck again, and jabbered away most noisily. Suddenly the bows of the ship were lit up with fireworks, and a perfect din of crackers followed. These were suspended in festoons from the bow-

sprit and fore-rigging, where they blazed and crackled for several minutes, presenting fantastic lines of light as they were reflected in the water. When the crackers were burnt out, the Chinamen set up a loud shout of "Hi-yah! hi-yah!" and went to bed, evidently well satisfied. In China, according to custom, fire-crackers are universally let off at the close of the year, so that evil spirits may be terrified, and that no malicious ones may mar the harmony of the coming new year; and for a similar reason they are fired off whenever any enterprise, as a voyage or a journey, is undertaken—not so much to bring *good* luck to attend it, as to drive away all *evil* from hindering it.

Captain Hoyrup, our skipper, was a Dane, and was the *beau ideal* of a sailor. Strict in his command over the officers and crew whilst on duty, he was nevertheless considerate for their comforts, which, as a rule, are more attended to on board Danish ships than amongst British merchantmen. A more contented ship's company, with better food and accommodation, could hardly have been found. In the midship portion of the vessel the Chinamen's provisions were stowed away in baskets, and strings of all sorts of vegetables hung from the beams; the bulk of their food—rice—was down in the hold. There also was closely packed the most extraordinary part of the Chinese freight—nothing more nor less than a number of coffins with the bodies of embalmed Chinamen, and jars containing the bones, teeth, and nails of others who had not left means sufficient to make mummies of them. All the Chinese have a great aversion to having their remains buried away from their ancestral tombs, and they consequently make every effort to have their bodies conveyed to their place of birth, not only from foreign countries, but from the more

distant parts of China, should they happen to die away from home. When the coffins are landed, hermetically sealed, at any of the large ports, they are deposited in buildings erected for the purpose, and the mouldering remains are thence borne away, after months or years, as the case may be, to repose with the ancestral dust. Teeth and nails are placed in jars and kept as relics in the family tombs.

But the most valuable portion of our freight was the gold which our Chinese passengers had saved out of their hard earnings at the diggings. As there was a government export duty of half-a-crown per ounce on all gold taken from the colony, and as all attempts at smuggling rendered the metal liable to confiscation, it was not difficult to tell how much there was on board the Jupiter. Our two hundred steerage passengers had 2,100 ounces amongst them, besides 1,750 Australian sovereigns, the total value amounting in round numbers to £10,000, or an average of £50 per man. The majority of the men had toiled for five years on the gold fields, and thus had saved about £10 per annum. This would have been considered a miserable profit by a European digger, but to the Chinamen it was a small fortune. Besides the gold in the hands of these men, we had in the strong room about 1,000 ounces belonging to a merchant named Choo-Kong, who traded in vegetable oils and other commodities, and pretty nearly 2,000 ounces more belonging to other passengers, besides 5,000 ounces on its way to Hong Kong in payment for merchandise shipped to Australia. Altogether, in one shape or another, we had about forty thousand pounds' worth of gold on board; and the responsibility of this valuable freight, which might at any moment excite the cupidity of some of our passengers, caused our captain constant anxiety, notwith-

standing the presence of my twenty sturdy sappers and miners.

Everything, however, went on like clockwork, when once the bustle after embarkation had subsided. I could not help remarking the homely look of the chief cabin, especially on the sunny days when we sailed into the trade winds of the South Pacific. On one side was the captain's state-room, and on the other the steward's pantry, with two Gothic windows between, looking out upon the main deck. Through the coloured glass of the skylight above, the sun shone brightly and cheerfully, giving our little room more the appearance of an apartment in a country cottage than of one in a ship at sea; and the idea was heightened by the variety of live stock on board. Fowls stalked and cackled about the main deck with perfect freedom, and tame pigeons flew about amongst the masts and rigging as they would have done amongst the trees on land. Forwards, a sow and some porkers grunted and squeaked for their morning meal, whilst amidships a setter and a kangaroo-hound growled at them in a watchful manner if they infringed on the after-deck. Altogether it was as cheery a breakfast-room as could have been found in a country villa.

The aspect of the scene changed at ten o'clock, when the Chinese came on deck to get their breakfast, or, as they called it, "early rice;" their second, and only other principal meal, being "evening rice," which they took at five p.m. They formed themselves into messes of six or eight, and squatted on the deck in circles, with their feet inwards. In the centre of each mess was a large crockery utensil, filled with rice, and several smaller dishes with fish, flesh, or greens. Each person held a bowl in his left hand, and a pair of chop-sticks, or "nimble lads," in his right. Filling

this bowl with rice from the large dish, he held it close to his chin, opened his mouth, and shovelled rice in until it was crammed full. Then he looked into the smaller dishes, and selecting dainty pieces of meat and vegetables with his chopsticks, dexterously put them into his mouth. The process of mastication then went on leisurely, until the whole was swallowed, and then a short respite was taken for conversation. Thus while one was eating another talked. It was a strange but picturesque scene, and the babel of their voices resounded throughout the ship. Few only took any drink at their principal meals, and most reserved their tea for quenching their thirst after smoking, or for other occasions. All beverages, as a rule, were taken hot, and, as in China, cold water was very seldom drunk, even by the poorest, the popular belief being that it is unhealthy.





CHAPTER II.

On the voyage from Melbourne to Hong Kong.—Fan A-wye explains the Titles of the Emperor and Celestial Empire.—Holiday of Kwan-Yin, the Goddess of Mercy. An Eclipse of the Sun frightens the Chinese.

IT happened, fortunately, that we had on board the *Jupiter* a Chinese missionary, named Fan A-wye, returning to his native land, who not only instructed me in his language, taking lessons in English in return, but gave me a large amount of information respecting his country. I learnt from him that a great amount of error exists amongst Europeans about the "Celestial Empire." The interpretation of the Chinese characters *Tien-chaou* denotes the "Heavenly dynasty" that rules, much in the same sense as English sovereigns are said to be, "by the grace of God, defenders of the Faith." The difference is that the emperors of China are considered to have supreme rank above all nations, from antiquity of civilization. Hence, to this day, the Emperor does not admit that foreign monarchs are on an equality with himself, and regards all who approach his court as coming from tributary states, and ambassadors with presents as tribute-bearers!

On my expressing surprise that the Manchoo-Tartar dynasty, springing from one of the smallest tribes of the

Mongol race, should rule over such a vast multitude of people, he said that "it was much about the same thing as Great Britain being ruled by a dynasty sprung from an insignificant foreign family. The great mass of the people in China are indifferent as to what dynasty is upon the throne, so long as they are ruled by the ancient laws of Confucius and other great lawgivers. These have been implicitly obeyed by the emperors and promulgated by their governments under the Tartar dynasty, so that the constitution of the realm remains the same now as it was many thousand years ago."

"But," said I, "it is said that the long queue worn by your countrymen is considered as a badge of subjection to their Tartar conquerors, and that the Taiping rebels allow their hair to grow to its natural length, as their ancestors did under pure Chinese dynasties—a sign that their chief object was to overthrow the Tartar government." "That is partly true," he replied. "The fashion of shaving the head and plaiting the upper hair into a queue was introduced by the Tartars, but more because it was the mode of dressing the hair amongst themselves, and as a cleanly custom, than from any political motive." He bade me remark that the hair of his countrymen was thicker, longer, and grew lower down on their foreheads than with my own, and that it was consequently more apt to get dirty and matted, if not shaven or clipped, and said that if I should see any of the Taipings, or Chang-mao (long-haired) rebels, as the imperialists called them, the luxuriance and length of their hair would strike me as being very remarkable, and this, indeed, I found was really the case.

Our voyage went on happily. Sometimes there were long periods of calm, followed by sudden squalls, during which

rain fell in a deluge, and it was amusing to notice at these occasions how the Chinamen rushed out with umbrellas and turned them upside down to catch the rain, which ran at the tips into pipkins. Once there was a festival in honour of Kwan-Yin, the Goddess of Mercy. Then all donned their best attire, and strutted about the deck with pride and complacency at their improved appearance ; many of them had fans in their hands, and swung their long tails from side to side with no small degree of vanity. Some of them, like shrewd traders, improved the occasion by offering coats and trousers for sale, of which many availed themselves, being bound in duty to appear clean and respectable on the occasion of sacrificing to a favourite deity. Kwan-Yin is an exceedingly popular goddess amongst the Chinese, and her images and shrines may be found in almost every temple of note throughout the land. She is specially worshipped in the southern provinces, and is held to be a good *shin*, or spirit, who will answer prayers by sending rain, or sunshine, or any benefits the suppliants may sue for, should they be worthy of them.

Soon after we entered equatorial latitudes, our captain made out from his nautical almanac that we should in all probability come nearly in the central line of a great solar eclipse ; and on the day on which it took place all the European passengers furnished themselves with pieces of smoked glass to witness the phenomenon. All eyes were turned towards the sun, and the first contact was observed about ten o'clock in the forenoon. At midday, when the obscuration was greatest, the solar rays were subdued, and the aspect of the heavens assumed the appearance of dawn. Upon this all the fowls on board the ship crowed and cackled as if it were another daybreak. The heat became

sensibly less, and the planet Mercury was seen with the naked eye. It was a clear day without a cloud in the sky, and in the pure atmosphere of the Pacific the eclipse presented a gorgeous spectacle. Meanwhile the Chinese passengers were no less observant of the occurrence. Fan A-wye told them of the wondrous calculation of Western astronomers, but most of the poor fellows watched with the terror-stricken aspect with which they had witnessed the advent of a great comet a few days before, and at the time of greatest obscuration sent up a hideous shout to the heavens. One brought a gong on deck, another a pair of cymbals, and others their tin cooking-vessels, and on these they beat with the greatest energy, making an indescribable noise. This was a demonstration to frighten away the dragon that was devouring the sun ! The riot was fearful, and the captain endeavoured to put a stop to it, but with little success until the sun began to reappear in all his splendour, having been saved from extinction, the Chinese of course supposed, by their incantations !





CHAPTER III.

Perils of the Sea. — Shipwrecked mariners' skeletons found on a barren rock in the Pacific. — A Typhoon in the China Sea. — Preparations to repel Pirates. — The Jupiter fired on by a large Junk, which is returned with deadly effect by the Sappers and Miners. — Pirate driven off.

NOW that we had sailed into the North Pacific, the course of the Jupiter was changed to the westward, and she bowled along at nine knots per hour under the north-east trade winds, sighting every day or two some of the innumerable isles that form the groups of Polynesia and the Indian Archipelago. Ever varying in outline, they formed a continuous island panorama for days and weeks together. Sometimes they were low coral isles, fringed with dangerous reefs, whose palm-trees were invisible at a few miles' distance, and sometimes they were peaked, precipitous, rocky islets, towering above the sea for hundreds—even thousands—of feet. It was an anxious time for the captain whilst sailing through these rocks, reefs, and shoals, subject to devious currents, and although he had full confidence in his crew, he was always on the look-out, and constantly studying his charts. Whenever he had a chance, he would take his ship outside the usual track, so as to avoid the intricate channels and to get plenty of sea room.

One day, whilst looking through his telescope at a

rocky island to windward of us, distant about five or six miles, he suddenly shouted out, "Back the mainyard! back the mainyard!" and told the steersman to put the helm hard aport. His orders were immediately obeyed, and the ship swung round to the wind with all her sails aback. The commotion caused by this brought all the passengers on deck, and the captain turned to me and said, "Just take a look through my glass at that island and tell me what you see." It seemed to be a barren, precipitous island, about five hundred feet high, cleft in two, with three needle-shaped pinnacles on its northern shore. On its southern half there was a deep cavern, with the surf breaking in white foam at its entrance. The northern half looked least desolate, and had something like vegetation on its flank, in the midst of which there appeared to be a solitary tree. There were no habitations to be seen, or signs of life, save the sea-birds which hovered about its perpendicular cliffs. "The only prominent object," I said, "is a palm-tree on the north part of the island." The captain took another look, "I take your palm-tree to be a signal of distress." "And so do I," said Petersen, the mate, "and that there are probably some shipwrecked people on the island." As this seemed probable, our skipper determined to beat up to the island, and, when we got as close to it as it was prudent to go, he despatched the mate, with two sailors and two of my sappers and myself, in the quarter-boat to land, and ordered us to make for the cleft in the centre of the rocks. When we got to shore, we found the island was of volcanic origin, with giant columns of basalt resembling those at Fingal's Cave; and as we passed the mouth of the cavern which had been seen so far away,

we heard the surf breaking against its walls with the noise of thunder. Not a ledge could be seen upon which the least footing could be obtained, so we rowed under the lee to the gap between the two hills, and there, as the captain had conjectured, there was a small bit of pebbly beach, where we could haul up the boat. Leaving the two sailors in charge of the boat, the others dispersed themselves in the direction of the signal post, and reached it with less difficulty than was expected. It was quite evident that some shipwrecked people had erected it, for it was a ship's spar, with a sailor's blue woollen shirt fastened to the top; but although we shouted and fired pistols to attract attention, there was no response, and we were about to leave the island, when I accidentally discovered in a little thicket the skeletons of two human beings. I called my companions to the spot, and, after we had vainly endeavoured to make out who they were, and to find some record of their sad story, we dug a grave, covered them over with earth and stones, and then cut down the signal-post, lest it should attract some other ship out of its course. It was difficult to tell to what country these unfortunate men had belonged. Probably they had been part of the crew of a Manilla trader, for the shirt appeared to be of Spanish manufacture.

No land was now sighted until we saw the most northern of the Philippine Islands, a long chain which stretches between Luzon and Formosa, the two greatest islands in these parts. There are several passages between them. We ran through the Balintang Passage, which has a channel eighteen miles wide, and passed fairly into the dreaded China Sea one evening, just as the last rays of the setting sun were

gilding the mountain tops. We landsmen now began to calculate at what hour we should get ashore, but the captain shook his head and told us that the worst part of the way had yet to come; in saying which he proved indeed to be right, for on the following day we encountered and had to beat up against the south-west monsoon, and three days afterwards were surprised by a furious typhoon, which threw the vessel almost upon her beam ends, and washed away boats and everything that was loose or movable. We got safely through this peril, however, and after a short period of calm, a favourable breeze sprang up once more, and the ship resumed her course for Hong Kong under a cloud of canvas.

Again the decks were crowded by our Chinese passengers, on the look-out to catch the first glimpse of their native land, and of the boats of their countrymen, which we call junks. The first we saw were fishing-boats, and, though far out of sight of land, appeared to be frail structures, with their bamboo masts and spars dipping into the trough of the sea as if they would go down. Women and children were on board, some of them attending to the nets, and appeared quite unconcerned as we passed. Many were sighted during the day, and some larger ones, which I took to be trading junks, but when these appeared the Chinese became anxious and even excited. Fan A-wye told me they were afraid that some of these were pirate junks, and that they were arranging amongst themselves lest some might attack the ship, and rob them of their gold, and murder those who resisted—for these pirates are sanguinary, desperate men. Our captain also took measures for our safety, distributed arms, and had his four guns loaded with ball. He directed me to tell my men that we were in the

vicinity of the Canton River estuary, which is frequented by the most bloodthirsty pirates on the coast, and that they were daring enough to attack ships as large as ours, and to rob and murder whenever they had the chance. "Therefore," said he, "get your arms and ammunition ready, and I shall leave the command of your men to you, and with my men will load and fire our four big guns should there be occasion."

This was an unexpected change in the peaceful state of affairs which had hitherto prevailed throughout the voyage, and I could not help thinking of the anomalous condition of a people who receive their countrymen, returning from abroad, with fire and sword instead of with the open hand of welcome. I mustered my men, of course, and when they were put through their facings on the main deck, the Chinese could not contain their joy, and kept "chin! chinning!" the soldiers with the utmost hilarity, some of them saying, that "tief man no can catchee sip; spose he come, Inkilee solya (English soldier) man all same soot him dead!"

Towards night the number of junks increased, and their lights sparkled in all directions over the waves. The Jupiter also had her lights hoisted, a white one at the foretop and two in the mizen-chains. It was quite dark after sunset as the moon did not rise until late, and the lights of the fishing-boats gradually disappeared as they steered towards the shore. The mate was in the bows with his watch, keeping a sharp look-out lest the ship might run down some of the junks. Suddenly he called out, "Bear away! a large junk on the lee bow without lights!" His order was obeyed, and the captain came on deck with his night glass. "That is a suspicious-

looking craft," he said to me; "have your men ready, and see that my hands reeve out the guns." Then he took up his speaking-trumpet, and called to the junk people in Canton jargon, "No can do! Spose you come, my ship sink you!"

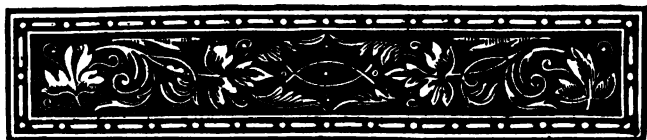
No answer was given, but the junk bore up to windward, and fired a shotted gun across our bows, carrying away the martingale. The light from the gun revealed the formidable appearance of the craft, which could not have been less than two hundred tons, with probably twenty nine-pounder guns on board, and a hundred men. The villains set up an unearthly yell, which at once showed their intention of boarding the ship. Not a moment was lost in returning fire with our two windward guns, and both hit the junk on the deck amidship, where most of the pirates stood, and no doubt did great execution. They replied with eight or nine shots, but they were all too low to do much harm to the Jupiter, and she stood so high out of the water that the pirates could not tell how many people were on board.

"Let her come nearer," I shouted to the captain, "so as to come within rifle range, and run out all your guns to windward." This was done, and I got my twenty men close under the bulwarks ready to fire a volley.

Down dropped the pirate, thinking he was sure to take a ship with only two guns. A number of jingals, or fire-lock pieces, were discharged from her, but their bullets fell harmless in the water. "Now, men," I called out, "fire!" at which they jumped up, and sent a volley over the bulwarks with true aim into the pirate. A second fiendish yell, mingled with the cries of the wounded, rose above the din, and stinkpots were thrown towards the

ship, but fell a long way short of their mark. "Now again, guns as well," and a regular broadside from cannon and musketry followed, carrying away one of the junk's masts. The pirates were paralyzed; they ceased firing, and took to their sweeps to row the junk out of range. This was not effected without further damage to the craft and probable loss to the crew, but as the Jupiter could not tack close enough to windward, the junk soon got out of range and escaped in the darkness. It was, indeed, useless to follow her, as she would make for some shallow bay where the piratical villages lay; besides, the attack would be reported at Hong Kong, where there were British gunboats stationed especially for the suppression of piracy. Every one on board was highly delighted at the repulse, particularly as none of us had been hurt. Nevertheless, a strict watch was kept for the remainder of the night, which fortunately passed over without anything further worthy of note.





CHAPTER IV.

British Fleet and Army at Hong Kong.—Estuary of the Canton River.
—Victoria Harbour and Town.—Camp of Indian Cavalry at
Kowloon.—Che-foo Harbour and Town, with French Fleet and
Army.



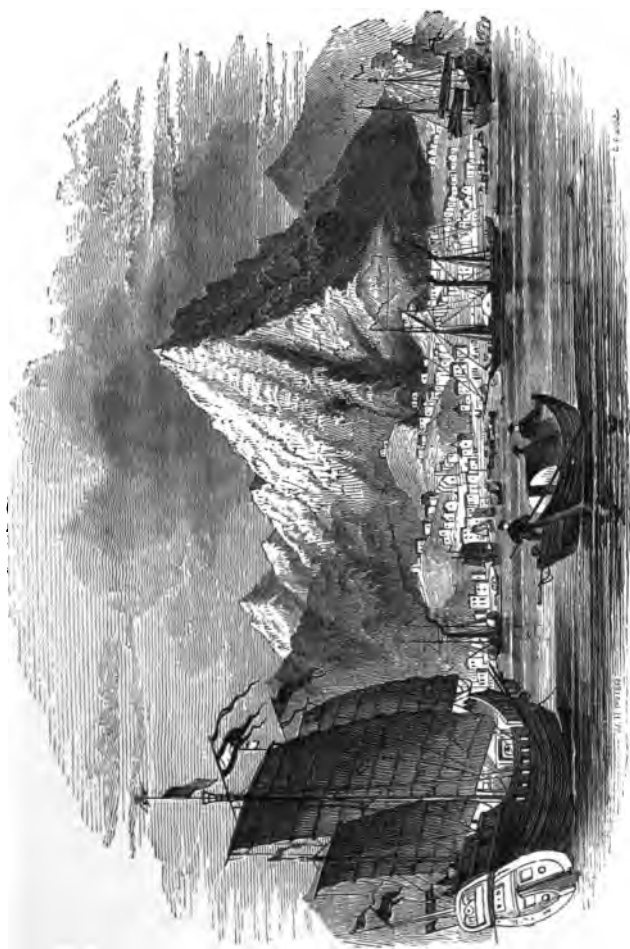
EXT morning a mist covered the horizon in the direction of the land, so that we had no idea what it was like until the ship came close upon it. As the sun rose in the heavens the mist became dispersed, and then the boldness of the scenery, and the absence of habitations, struck me as very remarkable, for I had formed the settled opinion that China was comparatively a low-lying country, and so densely peopled that there was not room enough for the inhabitants to dwell upon the land, so that a large proportion of the population were obliged to live in boats on the water. Now here, upon the very threshold of the "Great Flowery Land," appeared the converse of my anticipations. There was a bold, mountainous, and rocky region, apparently as desolate and untenanted as the primeval shores of Australia. Instead of cultivated rice-fields, half inundated with water, I beheld sharp mountain peaks rearing their granite heads far up into the sky; their flanks, rugged and precipitous, covered with a scant vegetation, almost destitute of shrubs or trees, presenting to the mariner an iron-bound coast.

This bold character was even more conspicuous as the vessel threaded its course among the numerous islands which separate the various passages leading into the estuary of the Canton or Pearl River, and to Hong Kong Harbour. At every mile the aspect of the country was more and more striking. Keeping close to the island of Great Lema, with the island of Poo-toi forming the north headland, the vista opened up was of the most picturesque description. Here the eye could penetrate for a distance of fifty miles up the estuary, with Lantau towering above all the other isles; while Victoria Peak, to the north, marked out the position of the island of Hong Kong.

Before the Jupiter entered Lema Channel, a Chinese pilot came on board and bargained with the captain to take the vessel safely into port. He came alongside in smart style, and clambered over the lee bulwarks like a nimble Jack tar. He was a sharp, confident fellow, and seemed quite at home in piloting the ship, and giving his orders to the seamen in tolerable nautical English. This piece of navigation was executed in the forenoon of a sunny day. The islands stood out in clear, bold relief against the blue sky, but without any signs of life on shore. It was otherwise on the inner waters sheltered by the land, where the sea was comparatively smooth. There numerous native craft sailed about in all directions, from the small sampan to the large trading junk. Most of them had flags and pennons hoisted at the mast-head, which adding to their quaint style of build and sails, had an outlandish though picturesque effect. As they sailed past the ship I observed that every one, large or small, had two eyes in the bows either carved or painted, sometimes both, giving the fore part the appearance of a fish's head. On

asking the pilot the reason of this, he replied, "Spose boat no eyes hab got, no can sabee ; spose hab got eyes, can see, can sabee." Fan A-wye explained that it was not believed the boat could see, but the custom was so ancient that no boat was considered properly finished without the eyes.

Towards noon the ship sailed along the western shore of Hong Kong, and several villas appeared on the heights, indicating the proximity of western civilization. But all other sights dwindled into the shade when the Jupiter rounded Green Point, and brought into view the town and harbour of Victoria—the proper name of the settlement. There the British fleet was lying at anchor. Besides men-of-war, there were numerous transports and merchantmen which increased the strength of the fleet twofold. Before the Jupiter reached the anchorage, she was boarded by the harbour-master, who pointed out a berth for her in the harbour, where she cast anchor. By this time the sampans, or shore boats, swarmed around the ship, the boatmen and boatwomen setting up a deafening clatter of voices to secure fares among the Chinese passengers. On their part, they were as eager to go on shore, and left the vessel almost as quickly as they came on board at Melbourne. Meanwhile the sappers and miners got their baggage out of the hold, which the sailors hoisted into the long boat, and they were ready to land in full marching order. Before we left the ship, every one of us thanked Captain Hoyrup cordially for the attention and kindness he had shown us during the voyage. The jovial skipper was equally profuse in his compliments, and said he was proud of having such well-behaved soldiers as passengers. Thus the Danish sailors and British soldiers parted the best of friends.



VICTORIA PEAK, HONG KONG.

It was with some difficulty that the long-boat of the Jupiter, conveying my sappers, could be steered through the shipping, from the crowds of boats that thronged the bay. Conspicuous among the fleet was the Chesapeake frigate of fifty guns, flying the flag of Admiral Sir James Hope, blue, at the fore. It was chiefly in consequence of the admiral's defeat at the Takoo forts, in the previous year, that the new expedition was undertaken to recover the prestige of the British navy. At length the boat was brought safely up to the *Praya*, or marine parade, where an immense throng of sailors, soldiers, and Chinese were actively employed in communicating with the shipping. The bustle was so great that my party was landed with their baggage without receiving the slightest notice; but, as it was necessary that we should find our way to headquarters, I accosted a sergeant of artillery and inquired if he would direct us there.

"Ah!" said he, "just arrived, I see. Wait a minute and I'll go with you myself, after I see these ordnance stores off."

In a few minutes this was done, and we started up the main street, or Queen's Road, as it is called. It was excessively hot. Everybody was dressed in the lightest clothing, most of the soldiers wearing pith helmets. We had still our heavy regimentals on, and complained to our companion of the excessive heat.

"You may well say so, comrade, for of all the broiling places I've been in, this town beats them hollow. It is as hot at night as in the daytime, and a fellow can scarcely get a wink of sleep."

"Then there is no chance of coming to terms with the Chinese, and war is sure to be carried on?"

"That is certain," said the sergeant, "for they think they will beat us, as they did the admiral's squadron last year. Lord Elgin's brother, Mr. Bruce, has presented an ultimatum, which has been rejected in the most insolent manner. Already the campaign has begun by our taking possession of Chusan. We sent a battery of artillery, a company of engineers, a detachment of marines, and two regiments of the line."

"In that case," I inquired, "where are we likely to be ordered off to?"

"I think," was the sergeant's answer, "that we will make a landing somewhere near the Takoo forts, to wipe out Admiral Hope's disaster."

Here we came in front of a large building where several officers were conversing, one of whom was conspicuous from the deference paid to him by the others. He was a spare, somewhat lathy, weather-beaten officer, above the middle height, and about fifty years of age, whose sword indicated him to be of the rank of a general. His accent unmistakably pointed to the north of the Tweed as the country of his birth, and his breast bearing the ribbons of the first Chinese war, the campaigns of the Sutlej, of the Punjaub, and of Oude, bore testimony to a long and active career of Eastern warfare.

"Who is that?" I whispered.

"He is the commander of the forces," responded the sergeant, "Lieutenant-General Sir James Hope Grant; as gallant a soldier, with as kind a heart, as it ever fell to the lot of an army to be commanded by. This is headquarters, and I will show you where to report yourself," continued the sergeant.

Having done this, he left for the artillery barracks; and

I received orders to proceed with my men to the same quarters, preparatory to embarking on board a transport. Every day fresh arrivals of troops were landed, until it became difficult to find quarters in the narrow strip of level ground which forms the settlement. On the opposite side of the harbour a small peninsula stretches from the mainland into the bay, forming a more salubrious spot for a camp than anywhere on the island of Hong Kong. For the occupation of this the British plenipotentiary negotiated with the Chinese authorities, to lease it at an annual rent. Strange to say, while the two nations were on the verge of war the application was granted.

Having occasion to visit the camp, I found the horses of the Sikh cavalry picketed in front of the troopers' tents, their movements restrained by ropes round their fetlocks, attached to pegs sunk in the ground. By this means the high-spirited Arabs were prevented from kicking each other, as they otherwise would have done. The uniform of this corps was grey, but the field-dress consisted of blue serge tunics made according to the fashion of the East, with red cotton cummerbunds, or sashes, round their waists, white cotton trousers, and jack-boots. Probyn's horse wore a slate-coloured turban, and Fane's a red one. Their arms consisted of tulwars—light bamboo-shafted lances—carbines, and pistols. Their lances, from which fluttered blue and red pennants, were struck in the ground in front of their tents, and gave the encampment a very picturesque appearance. This was further enhanced when the word of command was given to mount, and they went through some manœuvres. Altogether, I had not seen such a dashing body of light cavalry before. They were just the style of troopers to give a good account of the Tartar cavalry, should they cross lances.

Besides the troops of horse the Indian brigade consisted of several infantry regiments, named the "Loodiannas," "Punjaubees" and "Bombay Rifles." Some of these were tall men, and perfectly black, with finely chiselled features. Their uniform consisted of tunics and trowsers of drill, and turbans of dark brown calico. Their belts and ammunition pouches of rough brown leather, and their arms were the old regulation musket and bayonet. In these soldiers we saw a body of men well adapted for warfare in China, where they could stand the tropical weather better than British soldiers; and as they were commanded by English officers, with native non-commissioned officers, they would prove a formidable phalanx against the Chinese forces.

Perhaps the most curious element in this motley army was the Canton Coolie Corps, a body of Chinese labourers who had volunteered their services to act as porters in carrying provisions and ammunition in the field. They were well paid for their services, and showed no compunction in assisting the enemies of their sovereign. All that was required was to keep a sharp eye on those who had received some of their pay in advance, so that they did not run away; consequently when any of them wished to buy provisions for the voyage, they were placed under the charge of a soldier. Notwithstanding this, many escaped the vigilance of their guards. One instance was told of an ingenious trick, whereby a coolie got off with twenty-seven dollars paid him in advance. He was going about the town in charge of a soldier attached to the corps, making purchases for the voyage. Amongst other things he bought some pepper, and immediately threw it in the soldier's eyes and bolted, getting clear off.

It was a Saturday forenoon, and it so happened to be

the best day for seeing the inhabitants of the town—irrespective of the military and naval visitors—pursuing their avocations, as all business was transacted and closed by one o'clock, when the Europeans make a holiday of the afternoon. The thoroughfares presented an endless variety of people, whose physiognomy and general appearance impressed me with their novelty, where so many types of the human race were congregated. In this respect Hong Kong surpasses any other settlement of similar extent in the world. It is a living gallery of illustration to the ethnologist, where the various races pass under his inspection like a moving panorama of mankind, the figures being real flesh and blood. This arises from the number of Asiatics and Europeans who have settled down to try their fortunes in a colony under the strong but liberal and just sway of British rulers. Here the former are attired in their national costumes, which to western minds appear like the dresses at a fancy ball, while to the wearers they are the every day habiliments of their countrymen, and have been so from time immemorial, when our British ancestors were clad in skins of wild animals.

Such was the train of thought which passed through my mind as I gazed on the moving crowd below, observing each group or individual as a picture in itself. There an English merchant was carried along at a rapid pace in his sedan chair, the patter of his sandal-footed, sturdy chair-bearers resounding above the hum of the crowd, and their cry of "wilo! wilo!" to warn the populace to get out of the way. Next came a group of Lascars from one of the Indian troop-ships in showy, picturesque garb. Though there were not two dressed alike, yet all were tastefully clad. Behind them walked with stately tread a group of Parsees

and Moormen, their tight-fitting coats and stiff-peaked hats and turbans contrasting strangely with the loose-fitting garments of their Hindoo countrymen.

Thus the crowd passed along, some new feature appearing in this or that group of civilians, and the brilliant uniforms of the military and naval officers added to the splendour of the throng; while the Chinese presented an infinite variety of costume themselves, from the semi-nudity of the coolie, to the rich merchant dressed in light blue silk crape. And all this motley throng appeared content to dwell within the precincts of a British settlement, though the army and navy of England was preparing to make war against the government of the nation who ceded the island of Hong-Kong—the only cession of territory ever made by the haughty ruler of four hundred million subjects to a foreign power.

The embarkation of the troops progressed rapidly, and there was a daily decrease of the men-of-war and transports in the harbour, where, off and on, upwards of seventy pennants fluttered in the breeze. This was exclusive of French men-of-war and transports which had put in at Hong Kong on their way to their place of rendezvous at the treaty port of Che-foo. It so happened that the transport in which we embarked had to call there on her way to the general rendezvous of the allied expeditionary force in Talien Bay, still farther north.

During the voyage I was much impressed with the vast extent of China, as the ship sailed within view of the coast nearly the whole way, a distance of 1500 miles, and that amounted to only two-thirds of her shores on the Pacific, the China Sea, and the Yellow Sea. Sailing through the Ly-ee-moon Passage, only one-third of a mile wide,

the rocky mountains on either side presented a grand but wild picture, while the tidal current ran like a sluice, accelerating the vessel's speed.

At length the ship rounded safely the Shantung Promontory, and came to an anchor in Che-foo Harbour. Here the French fleet, under Rear-Admiral Protet, and the transport ships, presented nearly as grand an aspect as the British fleet at Hong Kong. The harbour opens up into a fine bay, with a beautiful sandy beach, villages, and cultivated fields. The land in the immediate vicinity of the anchorage appeared to rise by a gentle slope for several miles, and there abruptly terminate in a range of hills. In the afternoon I went on shore with Captain Gordon, R.E, who had some intelligence to convey to General Montauban, commander-in-chief of the French forces. The army comprised upwards of seven thousand combatants, besides camp followers and coolies. With the exception of fifty Algerine troopers, who acted as an escort to the general, there were no cavalry attached to the force. These Spahis were natives of Africa, and wore the Arab costume, with long muskets, which they carried slung over the back. Their heels were armed with long sharp-pointed steel spikes, the most murderous-looking weapons to which the name of spurs was ever applied. So far as appearance went, they did not contrast favourably with the dashing look and martial bearing of the Sikh cavalry. The artillery consisted of three batteries of rifled cannon, and one of mountain guns, also rifled. The engineer force comprised two companies of the *corps de genie*, the soldiers of which presented the best appearance of any in the camp. Of the infantry of the line there were six regiments, each upwards of a thousand strong.

Like the British army, the French expeditionary force had enlisted Chinese as supernumeraries, or *Corps Chinois*. We passed the lines of this native corps, when the bugle sounded, and forthwith they emerged from their tents, formed themselves into line, and had their names called over. Then they marched down to the beach in military order, to carry up stores to the camp, landed from one of the transports. A good number of them seemed to have acquired a martial spirit, shouldering their bamboo poles for carrying packages like muskets; keeping step and marching exceedingly well.

"There is good stuff in these fellows," said Captain Gordon, "from which to make disciplined soldiers. They are a taller and more muscular people than the lower orders of the southern Chinese, of which our Canton Coolie Corps consists, and evidently more tractable. I should just like a few regiments of these men properly drilled, and officered by Englishmen under my command, and I feel convinced they would make more efficient soldiers than our Indian Sepoys."

"I agree with you, sir," I responded, "and I think we might put their courage to the test by having a picked number of them attached to our own corps in carrying out any engineering operations during the campaign, while under the enemy's fire."

"That, serjeant, I have already witnessed at the siege of Canton, where the natives assisted us in bringing up supplies of ammunition, within the line of fire, without flinching. And what appears to me most remarkable, is that whereas they appear a quiet, stolid-looking people in time of peace, they seem to glory in warfare once they are roused up to the fighting pitch. Not only that, but it seems to be

a matter of small importance whom they fight against ; the foreign invader, the Tartar soldiery, or the Taiping rebels, are apparently all the same to them, and they will take any side so long as they are well fed, clothed, armed, and paid for their services. There is the true cause of their enlisting so eagerly in the allied army against their own government, the chink of the 'almighty dollar' has deadened their feelings of patriotism or loyalty to their sovereign."

It will be seen in the sequel he had ample experience to prove the correctness of his observation.

Next day the British transport took on board a large stock of provisions. Abundant supplies of fresh pork, poultry, eggs, vegetables and fruit were brought into Che-foo for sale by the neighbouring population. A regular market had been established in the centre of the French camp, and every morning several hundred Chinamen were seen disposing of their stocks. The eggs were of large size, and sold at a rate equal to four for a penny. Fowls were eight for a dollar, or sixpence a piece. Vegetables and fruit were hawked about the camp all day, chiefly onions, lettuces, radishes, cucumbers, apricots, plums and walnuts.

Having laid in his stores, the commander of the transport made sail for Talien Bay, the British naval rendezvous in the Gulf of Pe-che-lee, on the shores opposite to Che-foo. It had been the mission of Captain Gordon to the French general, with a despatch to inform him that the landing of the allied forces should be effected at Peh-tang, twelve miles from the Peiho River, defended by the famous Takoo forts.



CHAPTER V.

Landing of the Allied Forces at Peh-tang.—Skirmish between the Indian and Tartar Cavalry.—Takoo Forts taken.

TALIEN BAY, where the British squadron and transports had arrived from Hong Kong, is formed by two long peninsulas that stretch out on either side and converge towards the entrance of the harbour, where three small islands check the fury of the waves during south-easterly gales. The land makes a gradual slope to the sea on the west side, and in the north-east corner; the rest of the shore is for the most part precipitous and rocky. The hills were covered with verdure, though no trees of any size occur, except in and around the villages which are scattered over the flat country. Rising out of a plain in the north-east, and surmounting all the neighbouring hills, stands a mountain over two thousand feet in height, forming a very prominent feature in the landscape.

While my commanding officer was examining the capabilities of the place, he was tapped on the shoulder by a visitor from the camp on shore. On turning round he saw one of the interpreters in her Majesty's consular service in China, who accompanied the army in that capacity.

“Ah! how are you?” said Gordon, as he shook him by the hand; “you see I’m occupied in taking a survey of this fine bay.”

“Yes, it is a spacious harbour, with excellent anchorage and suitable landing-places for the troops, but there is a difficulty in procuring water, so I understand that the fleet moves to the mouth of Peh-tang River, where there is an abundant supply.”

“You are right,” Gordon remarked; “we took this news to the French general at Che-foo on our way.”

“Have you seen anything of the country about here since you arrived?” Gordon continued. “I know you to be an accomplished naturalist, and must have had a peep at this field of observation in the Great Flowery Land.”

“Yes, I have had a walk into the country, among those hills on the northern shore. ‘What a delightful spot for a botanist!’ you exclaim to yourself as you scramble up the hill side and put your foot accidentally on a lovely pink, or scratch your fingers in grasping at a rosebush, on which dozens of large bright red flowers cluster, at once gladdening the eye with their tints, and delighting the sense of smell with their fragrance, you at last attain the summit of the hill, and look proudly down on the fine fleet of ships sleeping lazily below, on the calm still waters of the bay, with no perceptible signs of life save here and there small specks of boats hastening to and fro. And in the distant valley on the land side, from amidst a group of bushes, you hear the soft notes of the “striated cuckoo,” so like in tone to those of a familiar species associated with the days of your boyhood. You reflect on the objects of the expedition, the insulted honour of your fatherland, which that proud show of masts is here to avenge; and your heart beats anxiously

for the future. The whirr of wings, and a dashing of something past you, recall you from your reverie. The disturbers of your solitude are a flight of rock pigeons returning from their feeding ground—a sign that it is getting late. The sun has set, and the screeching of the fillet swift, uttered as the birds dart round your head, signifies that it is time for you to withdraw your intruding steps, and leave them to the quiet enjoyment of their rocky cradles. Such are my first impressions of Talien Bay,” concluded the enthusiastic lover of Nature.

“You certainly describe your first impressions in most eloquent language, which would entice any one to take a trip among the hills. But I am afraid that my description would savour more of an engineer’s report upon their position for military defensive or offensive operations, than the beauty of the scenery and the fauna and flora to be seen. So I will limit my visits ashore to the practical objects of my profession, until the expedition moves on to Peh-tang.”

In consequence of the French forces not being ready, this movement was delayed beyond the allotted time. At length the French military and naval Commander-in-Chief arrived in company with Lord Elgin and Sir Hope Grant, when they inspected the British cavalry. The French officers acknowledged themselves much pleased at the gallant display of the King’s Dragoon Guards, and Fane’s and Probyn’s Troopers. All the horses had gained steadiness in their legs during their sojourn on this pleasant shore ; and the commander-in-chief, on reviewing the troops in the different camps, found them in first-rate health and spirits.

As the time of the embarkation drew near, the chief men

of the villages were summoned and informed of the intended departure of the army, that they might send in their claims for compensation for any damage done to their land or crops. Each man was only too eager to make his demand, and when the whole was set on paper the interpreter found that it amounted to 700 dollars. This he handed to the general, remarking that as the natives were so absurdly exorbitant in their estimates, and they had been so leniently dealt with, and paid so largely for everything supplied, they were not deserving of anything. But the policy of the government was not to oppress the peasantry in any way, so their claims were paid in full, to their delight and astonishment.

Next day the ships all formed in line according to their divisions, and proceeded slowly up the gulf; and by the afternoon the French fleet were seen on the horizon sailing along to the same rendezvous. The British men-of-war and transports numbered sixty-five sail, and the French fifty-five. It was a grand sight to see these noble vessels steaming up to the anchorage within five miles of the shore. The country here was very flat, and we could see nothing but a few mounds in the distance. These we were told, were the much-vaunted Takoo forts, which it was the first object of the expeditionary force to capture.

Dark clouds hung about the sky on the evening previous to the landing, bursting occasionally on the ships with a deluge of rain, and threatening, by their appearance, a similar treat on the morrow. While I and my comrades were lazily lounging about the deck, grumbling at the unsettled state of the weather, we suddenly observed a vapoury pillar lowering itself from an ink-black cloud, and connecting with the sea beneath about two miles off, and

thus forming what seamen call a waterspout. At first a tail, as it were, dropped from the dark mist above, gradually lengthening until it touched the water, which appeared in much commotion, and seemed to spring up towards the cloud, whirling and tossing about the spray. Then we observed a white hollow run through the centre of the column, up which the water seemed to be rushing. The spout continued for some time swaying to and fro, and bending in curves, now becoming nearly invisible, and now almost darkening into opacity, till at last, unlinking itself from the vapour above, the mass gushed downwards, and found its level with the waves below. After this the rain continued to fall even heavier than before.

In this inclement weather the allied forces landed at Peh-tang, where there are two forts and a village. But the rain was not the worst thing the troops had to contend with. For more than three miles in front of the forts there was nothing visible but a large flat on either side of soft mud and ooze, through which ran a causeway to the forts. As the boats touched the ground the troops jumped out up to their middles in mud and water. On reaching the shore a flat of soft, sticky mud extended across on every side, through which they marched, sinking ankle-deep at each step. Nearly every man was disembarrassed of his lower integuments, and one gallant brigadier led his men with no other garment on than his shirt. Immediately after the first party effected a landing, the Tartar troops in the forts retreated along the causeway towards Takoo, and the whole forces followed from day to day without accident, not a single shot being fired by the enemy. Wet and dirty, the troops laid themselves down to sleep on the muddy causeway. Fortunately the rain ceased, the

sky was serenely clear, and the moon beamed placidly upon them in their wretched and uncomfortable state. During the night some Tartars approached the outposts of the rifles to within a few yards, and were hailed by a salute of bullets that deprived one of their number of his mount.

Meanwhile it was ascertained that the ground inside the lower old brick forts, the first point to be attacked, was mined. At daybreak the generals passed through the village, and visited the south fort. Here Captain Gordon and my men were set to work to dig out the mines, of which there were four. The earth had been carefully moved round a circle of thirty feet at intervals of six or seven feet; eight inch shells filled with powder and slugs were placed in tin cases; these were connected by fuses with traps, into which flint-and-steel locks were set, and they again were attached to small strong cords. The whole were covered with matting and a thin layer of earth carefully flattened down so as to resemble the adjacent ground.

"These are cunningly devised traps," remarked my Captain, "so that the weight of a man placed on one of these pitfalls would at once throw him upon the cords and explode the mine."

"I have my doubts on that point," said another officer; "though ingenious, I question if the flint and steel could be made to strike fire in this way. However, we will not try the experiment, but clear out the infernal machines and destroy them with all possible speed."

"That you had better do, Captain Gordon, thoroughly," said General Grant, who was looking on with General Montauban at the operations, "for there is treachery going on. Captain Govan, of the Royal Artillery, has discovered a crock of powder with a lighted slow-match in it; so I

have circulated a general order warning the army to be on their guard against acts of treachery."

After the generals had taken a look round at the place, they gave orders to have the troops quartered in the town. This was a wretched village, yet it gave some kind of shelter to the men from the inclemency of the weather. The houses were strongly built, with walls of mud and chopped straw, resting on layers of reeds introduced about one foot from the ground, between the upper part of the wall and the foundation. The streets were narrow, with offensive gutters on each side; and after a shower of rain, liquid mud streamed from the roof-tops, and the pathway was ankle-deep in slush.

There were, however, some comfortable dwellings in the place, furnished more after the Tartar fashion than the Chinese. Captain Gordon and his sappers occupied one of these. The sides of the rooms had large cupboards reaching nearly to the ceiling, made of wood, neatly polished, and fitted with brass locks and hinges. The brick "Kangs," or stove-beds which occupied nearly one half of each apartment, were spread with mats and pillows, and had on one side large wooden chests for clothes. The walls and ceiling were covered with elegantly designed paper, and the former hung with mirrors and pictures. Porcelain jars and other ornaments were arranged in different parts of the room; and the narrow window frames covered with paper, as usual, had gauze curtains stretched across, and a pane of glass in the centre of each window.

On taking possession of these quarters, our gallant Royal Engineers, discovered two nicely dressed and pretty damsels weeping disconsolately in one of the rooms. Their relatives had fled without them, and left them to the mercy of the new

occupants. They were, of course, well treated, and conveyed by me beyond the limits of the village out of harm's way.

"Ah, sir," said I, to the captain on my return, "the Chinese behave in a heartless, cruel manner to their women. These two girls were abandoned to their fate, while their father, uncle and brothers saved themselves, without caring one jot what became of them. When we got to the farm-house where they were, not a kindly embrace was bestowed on them by these selfish men. They were at one of their meals, and never dropped their chopsticks to shake them by the hand, or offered them any of their mess; while the two poor creatures sat down in a corner of the room, away from their porky brethren, although I am sure they were hungry. However, the old father, said 'Chin! chin!' at the same time shaking his own hands, I suppose to thank me for bringing his daughters to him; I was angry with the old fellow and said 'Chow! chow,' pointing to the two damsels and then to my mouth. He nodded and so I came away."

"You are right, serjeant," Gordon responded; "woman's fate in China, is a hard one, compared with their condition in our own country, where the sexes enjoy each other's society in all the relations of life. Here the ladies of the family associate little with the men. They observe or, according to rule ought to maintain a strict reserve. They always eat by themselves. This most unsocial custom is universal throughout the country, among the rich and poor alike. Even common labourers, who are unable to have two suites of apartments, or even two tables, observe this regulation. Their wives wait till they have finished their meals, and patiently sit in a corner until they have done."

In the course of ten days every man and beast was

landed, besides all the stores and ammunition required for immediate use, and the hours were anxiously counted by every one until the allied army should march out of Peh-tang, and advance against the forts of Takoo.

At length the order was given for the army to evacuate the place and advance on the Peiho, where it had been ascertained by a reconnaissance in force that a strong body of Tartar cavalry were prepared to give battle. It was a fearful trudge for the troops across the mud. Numbers kept dropping out on the line of march, some of them resting awhile on the side of grave-mounds; others, especially the Indian infantry, finding their boots an impediment, preferred throwing them away, and tucking up their trousers, pushed boldly on. It was painful to see the cavalry horses struggling on knee-deep with their heavily-accountred burdens. The morass seemed interminable; but a travel of some four miles brought them to harder ground, and in sight of a long line of Tartar cavalry drawn up to oppose their advance. The appearance of the enemy ahead soon inspirited the well-fagged troops, and quickly made each man recover his alacrity.

The Tartar horsemen showed in great force, and as they stood in an unbroken line, some two thousand yards distant from the British column, they appeared magnified by the mirage into giant warriors riding on giant steeds. The Armstrong guns in front were ordered to advance and open fire, and shell after shell burst over the devoted heads of the enemy, but the line remained unflinching for some minutes, instantaneously closing up the gaps that were made in their order by the murderous shells. At last a general move was observed among the enemy: a party edged off to the right and another to the left,

with the intention, evidently, of surrounding the invaders. The Indian cavalry on the right waited anxiously for a trial of strength with the Tartars. An opportunity soon occurred.

There was a half-battery of artillery attached to the cavalry brigade, which, being unable to follow the movements of the main army on such heavy ground, had been left with an escort of Fane's horse. A party of Tartars suddenly charged the guns, and came on with such briskness that the officer commanding had hardly time to prepare his men to receive the shock; but the little band of Sikhs, under their gallant leader, were too smart for their assailants, and they retired discomfited. Several other skirmishes occurred, which always terminated with severe loss on the enemy's side. Nevertheless, it was acknowledged on all hands that they displayed great bravery, especially as they were armed for the most part with bows and arrows, spears, and only a small proportion with matchlocks. General Napier justly observed in his report that the Tartar cavalry behaved "with courageous endurance." They appeared very sanguine of success at first, as they were stated to be between 6,000 and 7,000 strong. But what could such an irregular force do against 10,000 well-armed and disciplined British and Indian troops, supported by some 7,000 French? The loss of the allied army, consequently, during this first engagement was trifling, while that of the enemy, as far as could be ascertained, was very severe.

As the army advanced, a complete change appeared in the aspect of the country. Instead of the interminable flat marsh, dotted with conical grave-mounds, through which they had come from Peh-tang, here were orchards girt with hedges of a most refreshing green, lining both banks of the

river. Water-melons, peaches, and a variety of other fruits and vegetables, were growing in abundance.

But more serious work was now in store for the troops than the prospect of revelling among the mazes of these orchards. To the south lay the upper Takoo forts, frowning with casemated batteries, high cavaliers, and long crenelated walls. The chief object was to secure possession of these forts and the command of the river. Sir Hope Grant saw his way clear—though the French general could not—that it was best to besiege the north fort before attempting the south. Accordingly, the whole force of the Royal Engineers, assisted by troops of the line, were ordered to make the approaches during the night. For the first part it was calm and undisturbed, save by the occasional hum of voices; but before midnight the booming of a gun at intervals would startle the restless slumberers of the camp, and bring prematurely to their minds the struggle of the forthcoming day. But these guns bespoke a still greater uneasiness in the minds of the enemy, who instinctively felt, notwithstanding the darkness, that the besiegers were advancing with their work. It was indeed a night of endurance for the Engineer officers, but they kept up the spirits of the men bravely, though a light-ball was occasionally shot from the forts, to reveal their operations, at which they would lie down. Their exertions were crowned with success; for ere the grey light of the dawn betokened the approaching day their work was completed.

At daybreak all the guns and mortars were in position, and shortly afterwards the British force detailed for the assault left their place and advanced towards the object of attack, mustering 2,500 combatants, followed by 1,000 French infantry. As soon as the enemy observed the

advance of the attacking column they opened fire from all the different forts, and the battle commenced on both sides. At half-past six a magazine in the upper north fort blew up with a terrific roar and explosion, shaking the ground for miles around as by an earthquake. Some few minutes afterwards a similar explosion in the lower north fort occurred, effected by a shell from the gun-boats which had steamed up to the river's mouth. Then a breach was made in the walls, and a storming party of British regulars were the first to enter the fort and plant the regimental colours of the 67th on the cavalier. At the same moment the French effected an entrance, and the garrison was driven back step by step and hurled pell-mell through the embrasures on the other side. Here the same obstacles which had impeded the advance of the allies obstructed the enemy's retreat; in addition to two wet ditches and two belts of bamboo stakes, there was swampy ground and a third ditch and bank. The storming parties opened a destructive fire on them from the cavalier, and the rampart outside was literally strewn with the enemy's dead and wounded.

A short time after the affray the defiant flags on the walls of the southern forts were hauled down and white flags substituted. It was thought, therefore, that the enemy desired to sue for peace. Accordingly some staff officers, with Mr. (now Sir Harry) Parkes, chief interpreter, were sent to negotiate, but the proposals were rejected. Upon this the troops marched towards the lower north fort, prepared for the struggle. To their surprise, not a gun was fired, and the garrison, consisting of 2,000 men, of their own accord threw open the gates and passively yielded, like so many sheep.

Again the southern forts lowered their flags of defiance

and substituted flags of truce, and again officers were sent to negotiate. Before evening the enemy were observed evacuating their position on the south, and a body of troops crossed the river and took possession of the forts. At dark the negotiators returned with an unconditional surrender of the whole country on the banks of the Peiho as far as Tien-tsin.

The success was not achieved without heavy loss. A large number of the casualties were among the officers, 22 of whom were more or less severely wounded. Of the men, 17 were killed outright, and 161 wounded. The French had about 130 casualties, and some of their officers were killed. The loss of the enemy was large; their dead lay everywhere, both inside and outside the fort. Their list of casualties could not have been less than 2,000, and probably more.

Thus ended the first stage of the North China War, in the capture of the treacherous batteries of Takoo.





CHAPTER VI.

March of the Allies on Tien-tsin.—Defeat of the Tartar Forces.—
Treacherous seizure of a party under a flag of truce.—Advance
on Peking.—Capture of the Emperor's Palace.—The Mandarin's
Daughter rescued from its halls.

AFTER a brief sojourn at Takoo, it was resolved by the allied commanders-in-chief to advance the forces upon Tien-tsin, and should the refractory government fail to negotiate satisfactory terms, then to march up to the walls of Peking and bombard the city; but before proceeding on the march it was necessary to take a survey of the roads in the neighbourhood of Takoo, and to procure baggage carts. This duty was undertaken by a staff officer, accompanied by an interpreter, and myself as assistant surveyor. As we proceeded along the highway we came to a mud-built roadside house, from the roof of which there was an extensive view of the roads between the village and the main Tien-tsin road.

Files of people were wending their way to the south forts, each man with a pole across his shoulders, from either end of which was suspended a basket containing fruit and vegetables, or fowls and ducks, for the market already established at the fort. Rich water-melons with green coatings and juicy yellow or pink pulp; pumpkins of various forms; cabbage, onions and garlic; apples with such rosy cheeks, but, alas! boasting no taste; pears, peaches

and gigantic apricots, and such delicious grapes ; the large, luscious purple, the long, cylindrical muscatelle, and the small, sweet Saxony. All these lay temptingly disposed as we watched the market men jogging past in their half-trot pace. Men with empty baskets, and strings of copper cash thrown over their shoulders, were on their way back, chatting and chaffing each other at the good bargains they had made.

The people evidently had confidence established amongst them again, and cartloads of women were hurrying back to the villages which they had but lately left in such dire alarm. All seemed satisfied with the change of affairs, and apparently preferring the dollar-abounding barbarian to the thieving, niggardly Tartar. Mr. Swinhoe entered into conversation with a prosy old gentleman with a fat, good-natured face.

"Ah !" said this worthy, "your honoured country has given those Tartars a good thrashing."

"Why," replied the interpreter, "you appear as if you were pleased at the event."

"Pleased ! surely I am pleased," said he ; "was not the whole of this country groaning with the burden these Tartar rogues imposed on us ? What need was there of squeezing the people to build forts for the purpose of driving you away ? We felt sure that your object in coming here was for the purposes of trade, and surely that was a boon for both countries ! But these Tartars, who acquired this country themselves by treachery, are naturally jealous of every other nation, because they are suspicious, and think that the main object of all other people is to wrest away from them by treachery what they won by the same base means."

"You do not then identify yourself with the Tartars ?"

Mr. Swinhoe asked, in order to draw out the views of this garrulous Chinaman regarding the invasion of his country, and the feelings of the peasantry towards foreigners.

"I should say not," he answered without the slightest attempt to disguise his opinions; "they are a wretched, filthy horde of men from the wilds of Mongolia, who love to oppress the people, and steal from them all they possess. We were truly alarmed to see the change affairs took last year, when your ships retired defeated, and we naturally feared that you would return and wreak your vengeance on the unfortunate villagers, who were forced against their will to subscribe to the erection of batteries that occasioned your treacherous repulses, when we knew you were coming on a mission of peace."

"But on the capture of the forts, you were agreeably disappointed at the treatment you met with at our hands."

"We were indeed; and more astonished still at your magnanimity in releasing the prisoners you had taken at the forts, and attending to the enemy's wounded that fell into your hands. If reports are true, you treated the Tartar wounded better than they did themselves."

"Such is always the custom among Western nations."

"It is not so here. It is the custom with the Tartars to torture and kill all who fall into their hands. Most of us that remained at Takoo watched from our house-tops the progress of the fight, and we were struck with wonder to see the way your troops advanced under fire. There was no dropping to the rear, and halting at a distance as with us. Your people always seemed to advance in spite of the ravages that the shot made in your lines, until the work was done. Surely such gallant troops must eventually conquer the world."

He concluded by saying that he felt sure that he spoke the sentiments of all the villagers, when he thanked the conquerors for their forbearance, and hoped that now they were masters of the field they would maintain their mastery, and hold possession of the country they had so ably acquired.

This dialogue gives a good idea of the feeling of the people in that neighbourhood towards the conquering allies, as expressed in numerous conversations that the interpreter and others held with them. It also shows the animosity that subsists between the pure Chinese and their Tartar rulers; and their indifference as to the dominance of any other rulers in the land, even if they were foreign barbarians, so that they were not oppressed. Thus notwithstanding their strong love of country, the Chinese appear to be destitute of that patriotism which is one of the noblest sentiments of European peoples.

In due time the allied army encamped before the walls of Tien-tsin without encountering any of the enemy on the way. Not only had they disappeared from the extended plain on the banks of the Peiho, but the fortifications of the city were evacuated. These defences were chiefly of recent construction, under the strategic plans of Prince San-Kolinsin, a Tartar of high rank, and generalissimo of the Chinese forces. It was jocularly mooted about the camp, however, that the prince was a runaway Irishman from the corps of Royal Marines, whose proper designation was Sam Collinson.

Captain Gordon made a rough survey of these fortifications, and acknowledged that San-Kolinsin had proved himself a good engineer, by the masterly manner in which they had been constructed and made impregnable from the

sea. He had hitherto only contended with a naval power, and shown himself fully equal to the command and trust bestowed upon him. But when he found a powerful army with artillery opposed to his forces, he deemed it prudent to retire upon Peking and allow the invaders to advance into the interior, where he hoped to surround them by superior numbers, or by some treacherous movement inveigle them into an ambush. Accordingly some Chinese emissaries arrived with a flag of truce at the camp, bringing despatches from Peking, which invited the ambassadors to the capital, to treat matters diplomatically, bringing only a guard of two thousand men, while the allied army remained at Tien-tsin. These proposals were rejected, as they evidently were intended to prepare a trap for capturing the plenipotentiaries.

The weather by this time had cleared up, but the sun shone out so intensely hot that the troops suffered as much discomfort as they did during the heavy rains. Fortunately, provisions were abundant and cheap. The most relished luxury during that hot season among the natives as well as the Europeans, was ice; and strange as it may appear, there was abundance of it in the neighbourhood, stored in ice-houses, which are filled during the winter, when not only is the river frozen over, but the sea itself several miles from the shore. Hawkers were running about the camp all day long with this much-desired article.

On entering some of the better class of dwellings in the suburbs of the city, I observed some new uses which the Chinese put ice to. In the middle of some apartments huge blocks were placed in stoneware basins, which gave a delicious coolness to the air. But its most novel application was *to lie upon ice* during the extreme heat of the day.

The ice for this purpose is crushed and scattered over the stove-couch—which is heated by fire in the winter—it is then covered with a mat, on which the native casts his body as soon as he has divested himself of superfluous clothing; and, thus released, refreshes himself with a cool siesta, until the sun partially withdraws his mid-day heat, and enables man again to renew his energy.

At the rumour of the success of the allies, and their intention to advance on Tien-tsin, great numbers of the inhabitants retired from that city; yet some of our officers, with the interpreter, passed through its streets, and observed no material change from the usual crowded thoroughfares of a Chinese town. The ordinary business of the street-vendors and stall-keepers continued with the usual alacrity, and the lower classes laughed, grumbled, and scolded one another, clad in shabby old rags, yet happy withal. The more respectable inhabitants, however, dressed in their long blue frocks, might be seen grouped together, looking anxious and unhappy, and the principal shops were shut. The crowd increased as they neared the water-side, and became insufferably large in the neighbourhood of an extensive building, where a guard of British soldiers paced to and fro, and numerous officers and orderlies passed in and out its spacious gates. This large house belonged to a wealthy corn-merchant, sur-named Han, and was conveniently divided into different series of apartments, with two doorways leading on to the bund, or river's bank. The higher of these led to two suites of rooms, one of which was occupied by Lord Elgin and staff, and the other by Sir Hope Grant and staff. The lower door led to the French general's quarters.

Time pressed, however, and their sojourn here was short,

for in eight days orders were given for the army to march on Peking. Accordingly, one morning we were aroused from our slumbers at an early hour by the band of the Rifles playing "Old Folks at Home," and, turning out, saw that the march had commenced. The neighbourhood of the "Han" establishment presented a scene of bustle and confusion easier imagined than described. Rows of carts and waggons lined the way, all carrying little flags with numbers on them. As the main body of the army marched through the streets of Tien-tsin it was slow work, and accompanied by numerous stoppages as they gradually progressed through the street of "Everlasting Prosperity." The Chinese lined the thoroughfare on either side, and curious it was to hear the strange remarks of the various shopkeepers who stood at their doorways watching the uncouth procession of carts attended by men of all shapes, sizes, shades of colour, and costumes.

"They must surely be composed of a great number of nations," said one; "see how black some are, and how fair are others."

"No," said another, "they are only from two countries, England and France. Those black men (our Indian troops) are their slaves."

While on the march a flag of truce arrived, borne by two mandarins, who announced that the President of the Imperial Court of Punishment, and the President of the Council of War, had been appointed to treat with the ambassadors, and were now on their way to Tien-tsin. The flag-bearers were dismissed with the reply that there could be no treating till the army arrived at Tung-chow.

A second despatch from the commissioners at that town met the ambassadors on the route, when it was deemed

advisable to send Messrs. Parkes and Wade—the chief linguists in the British service—to see them personally. This they succeeded in doing. One was the Prince of E., a tall, dignified man, with an intelligent countenance, though a somewhat unpleasant eye. The other was softer and more oily in his manner, but also intelligent. Both were extremely polite, the prince especially, and without condescension or affectation. They were so bland and considerate during the conversation which followed, that the interpreters reported to Lord Elgin he could rely on their good faith and that of their government. It turned out that these assurances were but hollow professions intended to deceive, so that the allies might be put off their guard.

Notwithstanding the many occasions on which the allies had suffered from the treachery of the Chinese, yet they believed on this occasion in their “good faith,” especially as it was guaranteed by some of the highest personages in the empire. But it would appear that the Chinese mind is so distorted they deem an act of treachery not merely as no dishonour, but actually an instance of their superior diplomacy and tactics if they succeed. In this instance the mandarins invited the ambassadors to encamp the army at a certain place near Tung-chow, while negotiations were going forward, which was so far acquiesced in that the quartermaster-general, with an escort, proceeded to examine the locality.

Meanwhile the natives they questioned on the route spoke ominously to the other interpreters of the success of the army's advance, intimating in strong terms that San-Kolinsin was carefully baiting his trap, and that his soldiers were loud in their brag how they were going to surround



TARTAR GENERAL AND TROOPS.

the invaders on the march and cut them to pieces, so that not one of them should return again to Tien-tsin alive.

As I was now pretty well conversant with the Chinese language, I formed one of the escort in the capacity of a sub-interpreter. Our party consisted of eight officers and volunteers, escorted by five dragoons, and twenty Indian troopers. We arrived safe at Tung-chow, and were put up and entertained by the authorities for two days, after which we returned to the camping-ground. On our way we were surprised to find a large Tartar army encamped, with a number of guns in a commanding position overlooking the ground. This raised our suspicions, and Mr. Parkes went to demand an explanation from the Prince of E.

Meanwhile Colonel Walker awaited his return with part of the escort, including myself. He observed active preparations for an attack going on in the Tartar lines, and a growing disposition to control his movements. At last he was surrounded, the scabbard of his sword tilted up, his legs were seized, and a vigorous attempt made to unhorse him. His resolve was taken in a moment; he waved his hand to his men to follow him; we all dashed through the Tartar lines, and forcing our way to the front, reached the allied army without any loss, although many shots were fired at us. While the commander-in-chief was listening to a report of the escape, a very heavy fire was opened on the army.

The assault was undoubtedly more premature than the Tartar general had intended, for it is plain their intention was to beguile the allied troops to encamp peacefully in the midst of their numbers, and then to attack them unawares. Their plans were, at all events, foiled, for there being no signs of the return of Mr. Parkes and his companions, Sir Hope Grant made arrangements for the immediate advance

of the forces at hand, which did not exceed 3,500 men, while that of the enemy was estimated at 30,000 men. After a sharp engagement, which lasted for two hours, the Tartars, who could not stand the fire of the artillery, gave way, and spirited charges were made by the cavalry, dispersing and routing the treacherous enemy. Seventy-four pieces of cannon were captured on this occasion, and all destroyed.

Several other engagements ensued, and the progress of the invading army was stubbornly but ineffectually contested, for the enemy was defeated on all occasions with great loss. Attempts were made to ascertain what had become of the party so treacherously captured, but nothing reliable was heard of the prisoners, and the allies laboured under the fear and suspicion that they had been barbarously murdered.

At length a communication was received from the Prince of Kung, brother to the Emperor Hien-Fung, who acknowledged that the government did hold certain British subjects prisoners, but as they were taken after the fighting had commenced they could not be released until the convention had been signed, and the allied armies withdrawn from the country. The reply to this was that the prisoners must be given up, or the army would advance up to the walls of Peking. Again the Prince wrote, using every imaginable argument to delay the advance of the troops. In one of his letters there was a card enclosed, written in Chinese and English, in Mr. Parkes's own hand, and from this testimony all were delighted to learn that one of the prisoners at least was alive.

In a few days the invading army came within view of the long-secluded capital of the Celestial Empire. The city lay



IMPERIAL AUDIENCE CHAMBER.



at a distance of some six miles on flat ground, and was almost entirely hidden by its long line of wall; but the towers over its gates, and its large corner towers, loomed conspicuously through the clear atmosphere. Next day on the march, the several brigades of the army got separated, the French moving to the right of the British position in the direction of the Emperor's principal palace, called Yuen-ming-yuen, situated outside the walls of Peking. When they arrived there they captured the grand entrance, and bivouacked under the trees outside, expecting that the British would follow. But our troops were engaged in scouring the country to engage the enemy, while our allies were bent on plundering the palace, or rather congregation of palaces, in the extensive grounds of this famous retreat of the imperial court.

Be that as it may, only a few British troops joined the French army. Among these was the staff of the topographical department, to which I was attached. We were among the first to enter the interior of the grounds. Facing the gate stood the grand reception hall, which we entered, and found ourselves on a smooth marble floor, in front of the Emperor's ebony throne. This was the Grand Audience Hall, for receiving Ambassadors from European states on the negotiation of treaties, and tributary Eastern Envoys when declaring allegiance to the Emperor. The subjoined illustration represents the latter phase of Chinese Court receptions by Taou-Kwang, father of the unhappy monarch who had fled from his palace, which was doomed to destruction. Near this Audience Chamber were his two retiring-rooms, and in the rear his Majesty's bedroom. A large niche in the wall, curtained over and covered with silk mattresses, served for the bed, and a sloping platform enabled him to mount into it.

On the extreme left were the Empress's apartments, but none of them furnished so splendidly as those of the Emperor. Several baskets of fruit and sweetmeats lay on the table, showing that her departure had been sudden. Adjoining these rooms were numerous smaller ones, forming an intricate maze, well stored with silks and other articles of female attire, having evidently been occupied by the Empress's attendants.

Through these apartments our party wandered at will. I threaded my way through their intricacies to see if there were any of their former occupants left behind. At the entrance to one chamber a little dog rushed at me, barking vociferously—a beautiful little creature of the rarest Chinese breed. I tried to pacify it, but without success, as it retreated at my approach, backing into the apartment, barking more fiercely than before. As I peeped through the doorway, I heard a faint scream, and on entering the room beheld a young woman, richly dressed, in a state of tribulation.

"Great prince, forbear!" she cried, falling on her knees before me, and clasping her hands in an attitude of supplication. "Oh, spare my life! I am a woman in distress. Save me! save me!"

"Rise up," I said, in broken Chinese, taking her gently by the hands; "you have nothing to fear. Though I am not a great prince, yet I am a British soldier, who will protect you from any harm."

Hearing words of this kind in her own native tongue reassured her, though imperfectly spoken; so she sat down on a couch and lifted her dog up into her lap and tried to quiet it. Then she explained how she belonged to the household of the Empress, who had taken her departure

suddenly, and with only a portion of her attendants, leaving the others to be brought away by their relatives in the city. She was the only one left behind, expecting her father to come from the city and take her home, but he had not been able to do so, as she was told by the eunuchs left in charge of the palace that the gates were closed, and no one allowed to go beyond the walls.

I endeavoured to explain how matters stood; that the palace was in possession of the foreign troops, and in doing so she became somewhat pacified.

I then returned to our party, and reported to my superior officer what I had seen. The colonel, Wolseley, gallantly allowed me to protect the forlorn damsel, and assist her in leaving the palace before it was given up to plunder, when she might have fared badly at the hands of the French soldiery. No time was lost in securing a sedan-chair and enlisting the services of two eunuchs, who were only too glad to get away by carrying the maid of honour to a place of refuge. Knowing all the intricacies of the palace grounds, they carried her and her pet dog beyond the walls of Yuen-ming-yuen, through a small side door, some distance from the main entrance, under my escort.

When they got outside, the question was where to take her to a place of safety, as it was impossible to enter the city. The chair-bearers knew of a Buddhist nunnery not far off, so it was agreed that she should be carried there. On arrival at the place the inmates were in great fear at seeing a foreign soldier approach the gate, but this was soon dispelled when the damsel in the chair told her story. Not only did the nuns gladly receive her, but offered the protection of their establishment to the two attendants.

I bade my charge good-bye, promising to return at the

earliest day to inform her when it would be safe to leave; but on no account to do so until affairs were settled between the contending powers. She thanked me earnestly for my protection, and promised implicitly to obey my advice.

On my way back I thought much of this strange adventure, and during the bivouac that night could scarcely sleep for thinking about this beautiful prize, which was more precious than all the gold and jewels I had seen in the palace.





CHAPTER VII.

The sacking and burning of the Imperial Palaces at Yuen-ming-yuen.
—Valuable plunder taken by the French.—Horrible tortures and deaths of British and Indian subjects.—Lord Elgin orders the destruction of the Emperor's Palace by fire as an act of retribution.

IN the day following that on which the French took possession of the Yuen-ming-yuen palaces, Lord Elgin and suite, and Sir Hope Grant and staff, visited the famous imperial gardens and residence. Rambling through the summer park, they estimated the extent of wall surrounding the whole at about twelve miles. Pebbled paths led through groves of magnificent trees, around lakes, into picturesque summer-houses, over fantastic bridges. As they walked along, herds of deer ambled away from them, tossing their antlered heads. Here a solitary building rose fairy-like from the centre of a lake, reflecting its image on the limpid blue liquid in which it seemed to float, and then a sloping path would carry them into the heart of a mysterious cavern of artificial rocks, and lead them on to a grotto in the bosom of another lake. The variety was endless and charming in the extreme; indeed, all that is most lovely in Chinese scenery, where art rivals nature, seemed associated in these delightful grounds. The resources of the designer appeared to have been endless, and no money had been spared to bring his work to

perfection. All the tasteful landscapes so often viewed in the better class of Chinese paintings, and which they had hitherto looked upon as wrought out of the imagination of the artist, were here fully set forth.

They wandered for hours through the cool shades and winding paths, from building to building. Here and there was a terrace on the side of a hill, with summer-houses so cool, each containing suites of richly-furnished apartments, now deserted, most of them untouched ; although they met scores of Chinese carrying away heavy loads of plunder from the out-buildings, chiefly cloth and porcelain-ware. Then they ascended a flight of some eighty marble steps, a gentle stream of water at each side falling into a large marble basin at the bottom, bridged with marble also. At the top they reached a terrace surrounded by dark pine-trees, in the centre of which stood a Buddhist temple. They entered the building where the triple deity was represented by huge wooden images, with numerous smaller shrines and smaller images. Before the great idol were the ashes of the stocks of incense, the last that ever were to smoke at his shrine in that imperial temple.

"What is this?" said the interpreter ; "gold, is it not?" taking up with some difficulty an idol about two feet high.

"Gold, my dear fellow!" another replied, "do you think gold is so plentiful in China that they have golden gods in a remote temple like this, where any one might carry them off?"

"It's heavy enough, then, if it is not gold ; let us smash him and see;" and down went the divinity with a heavy thud on the marble floor, but no sign of a smash in him." "I am sure it is gold," he again asserted.

"If you think so," said one, "bring it home, then."

"I wish I had that lazy servant of mine here," was his rejoinder, as he stood looking at the idol, "I should make him carry it." So they left it there ; but when the burning came it was found by others, who brought it home and made a fortune out of it.

Proceeding along the terrace, they arrived at one of the Emperor's favourite residences, where he loved to retire and pass his days with one or more of his wives. Of these he had thirteen. The first wife, or Empress, had no family, but two of the junior wives had blessed him with issue, one a boy (afterwards the reigning Emperor Tung Che), the other a girl. His children, as well as his wives, had accompanied him in his flight to Je-hol, an imperial residence in Manchoo Tartary, about a hundred miles from Peking, a cool retreat during the summer.

On entering this palace they passed through several courtyards paved with marble, surrounded by apartments furnished in the most gorgeous style, with rare ornaments, and cabinets containing sets of the imperial yellow china. There were also imperial sceptres in green and white jade-stone, and tall jars in porcelain, painted in the richest colours, representing a series of hunting scenes in which the tiger and stag were pursued. Tablets adorned the walls of large size, in which sylvan scenes of landscape or hunting were represented, and in which the figures, trees, water, animals, and other objects, were inlaid with precious stones. There were sleeping-rooms to the right and left, with satin embroidered hangings over the beds, where doubtless the fugitive Emperor had slept. Here, it was said, Hien Fung lay surrounded by the favourites of his harem when the report reached him that the foreign invaders had landed in his territory and were marching on his capital. Like a

second Sardanapalus he mocked at his enemies, and continued to revel in his palace, but not like that ancient monarch to fight to the death in the defence of his crown. He was more effeminate and cowardly, so he fled into the fastnesses of his native mountains.

It is impossible to describe the riches with which the various palaces and subsidiary buildings of Yuen-ming-yuen were stored—not only with Chinese articles of value, but European articles of *vertu*, jewellery, and furniture, which the ambassadors of Great Britain and France had brought with them as presents as far back as the past century. These, it may be easily conceived, excited the cupidity of a victorious army, especially the French troops, who were first on the ground and in possession of the principal palace.

At first it was understood that the spoil should be fairly divided between the Allies, but the French managed to secure by far the greater share, as they were the first to get in. At last every one who could get permission to leave the camp repaired to Yuen-ming-yuen, as the generals had made no objection to plundering the palaces. What a terrible scene of destruction then presented itself! Officers and men, English and French, were rushing about in a most unbecoming manner, eager for the acquisition of valuables. Most of the Frenchmen were armed with large clubs, and what they could not carry away they smashed to atoms.

The love of gain is most contagious. No one just then cared for gazing tranquilly at the works of art; each one was bent on acquiring what was most valuable. At the close of the day's sacking it was found, as was to be expected, that much dissatisfaction had arisen among the different

members of the army. Numbers of the officers, and nearly the whole of the men, had by their duties been deprived of participation in the spoil. Accordingly Sir Hope Grant issued orders that the British share of the plunder must be handed over to a commission of prize agents, to be sold by auction, and the proceeds divided *pro rata* among the officers and men. Sir Hope Grant very generously made his share over to the men, and as a token of respect the officers presented him with a gold claret jug richly chased, one of the handsomest pieces of the booty. The French general returned home laden with diamonds and pearls.

These matters being so far satisfactorily arranged, the allies concentrated their forces before the An-ting Gate, an imposing structure on the walls of Peking, which are forty feet in height. It was intended to bombard this gate and effect an entrance if the Chinese authorities did not surrender it within twenty-four hours. Every preparation had been made for the assault, when at the last moment the gate was surrendered, and the British troops had the honour of planting their colours first upon the summit.

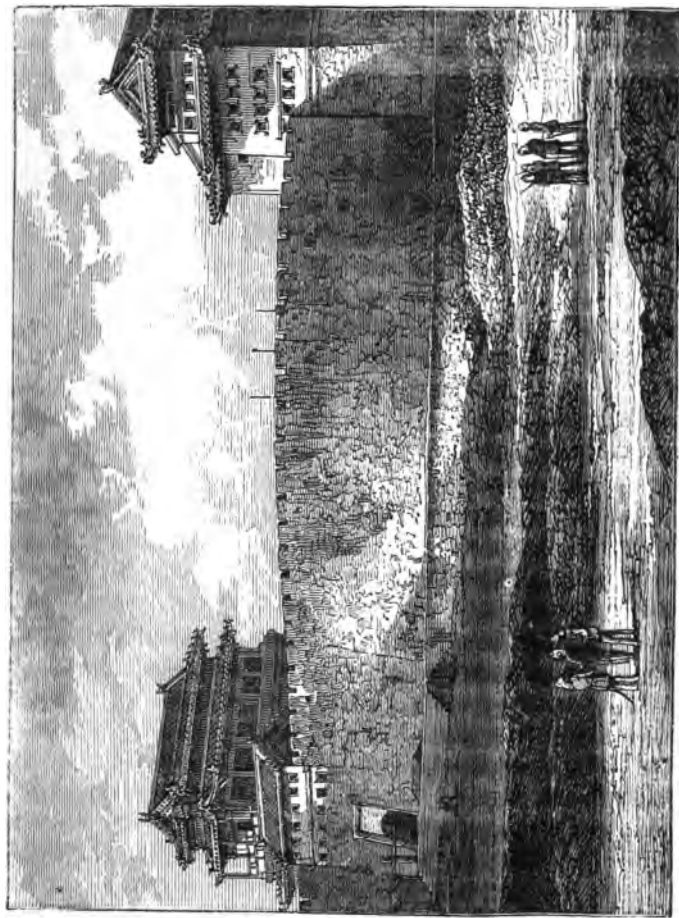
Meanwhile, great anxiety was felt as to the fate of the captives so treacherously seized. Prayers were offered up by the chaplain at all the services on their behalf, and the congregations most heartily joined in their petitions. Soon after the arrival of the troops at Peking, the fears regarding Mr. Parkes, the chief interpreter, and Mr. Loch, private secretary to Lord Elgin, were put an end to by their arrival at head quarters. But they could give no account of what had become of their companions in distress, as they had been separated from the time of their seizure. Though these gentlemen suffered much privation during their detention, yet they received no bodily harm. Very different

was the treatment of the other victims in the hands of their cruel captors.

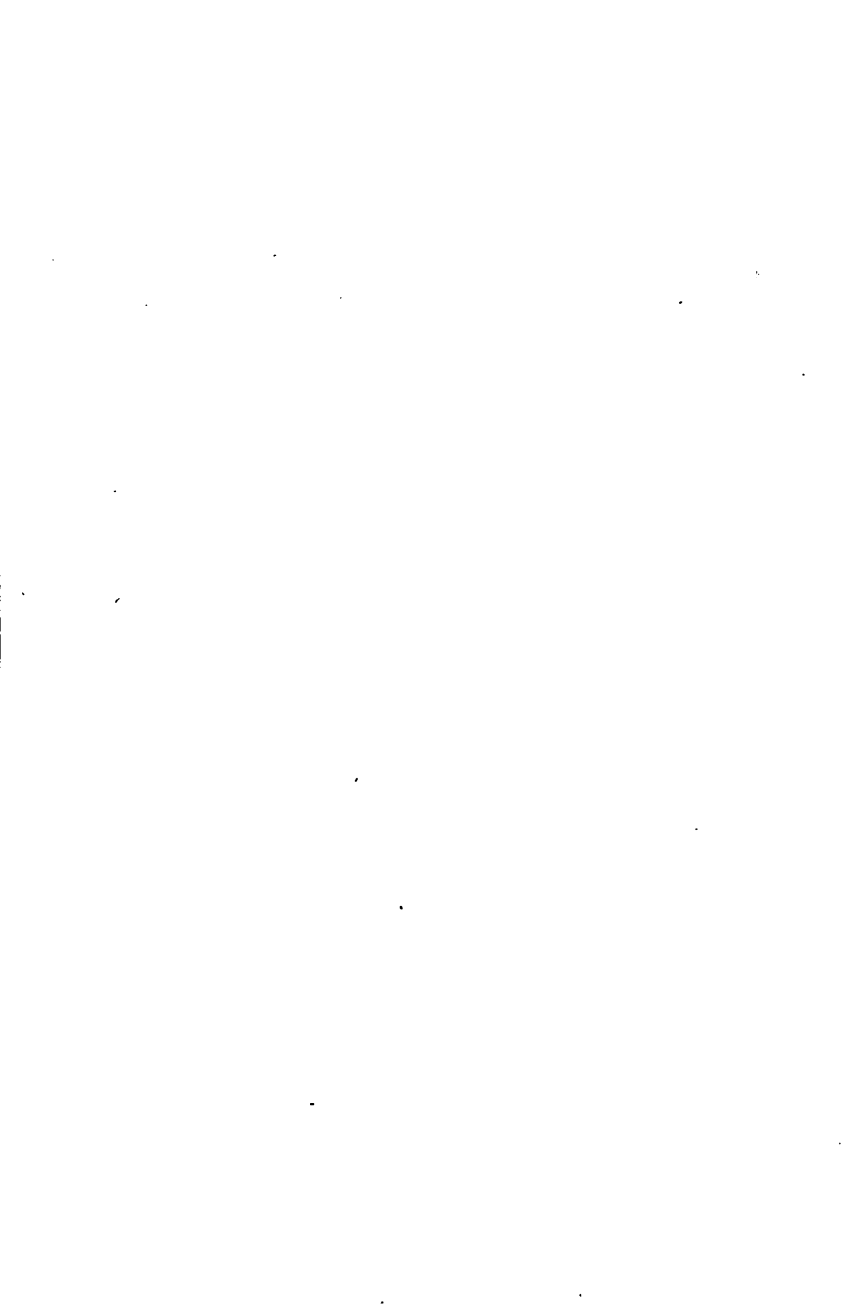
After the surrender of the gate, eight Indian soldiers and some Frenchmen were restored, fearfully emaciated, with their arms and wrists much lacerated by the tight cords that had bound them. On the following day two more Sikhs were brought back, and these the Chinese declared were the last of the survivors. The poor creatures were in a fearful state of anguish, and one of them died shortly afterwards. Then came several carts, with twelve coffins containing the mangled and decomposed remains of twelve more of the captured, while two missing were supposed to have been decapitated and their bodies thrown into a canal. Among these victims was Mr. Bowlby, the "Times" correspondent.

When the Allies learned the sad fate of their countrymen, the indignation in the camp reached a terrible pitch, and fortunate it was for the Chinese that no more encounters occurred, as they would thenceforth have received no quarter on the battle-field. Lord Elgin was so impressed with the necessity of enforcing a severe act of retribution on the Emperor, that he resolved on committing the palaces of Yuen-ming-yuen to the flames. His reasons for doing so were that it was the Emperor's favourite residence, and its destruction could not fail to be a blow to his pride as well as to his feelings. He also found that it was to this place the prisoners were taken, that they might undergo the severest tortures within its precincts.

The first division were detailed for this work of destruction. Ere long a dense column of smoke rising to the sky indicated that the work had commenced. As the day waned the column increased in magnitude and grew denser



AN-TING GATE OF PEKING. (Occupied by the Allied Forces.)



and denser, wafting in the shape of a large cloud over Peking, and having the semblance of a fearful thunderstorm impending. On approaching the palace the crackling and rushing noise of fire was appalling. The sun shining through the masses of smoke gave a sickly hue to every plant and tree, and the red flame gleaming on the faces of the troops engaged made them appear like demons glorying in the destruction of what they could not replace.





CHAPTER VIII.

Desolation of Yuen-ming-yuen Palaces and Gardens.—The Mandarin's Daughter in a Buddhist Nunnery.—Abbess and Nuns dedicated to the Goddess Kwan-yin.—Loo A-Lee, a Tartar lady not small footed.

DURING these exciting days and nights, I attended closely to my duties as a Royal Engineer. In the event of Peking being bombarded, the sappers and miners were at work preparing the approaches before the An-ting Gate to take it by assault, or make a breach in the walls. None of these men rushed to plunder the imperial palaces of Yuen-ming-yuen. Duty before pillage was the order of the day, as it has always been with that distinguished corps. When, however, the gate was surrendered to the British forces, and it was not necessary to make the assault, we were at liberty to move about. My first thoughts were to visit the forlorn damsel I had rescued from the palace and endeavour to restore her to her father. Accordingly I wended my way to the Buddhist Nunnery, hoping to find her well and safe in that asylum.

Instead of finding the place easily, as I expected, I was fairly bewildered at the change in the once beautiful edifices of Yuen-ming-yuen, which formerly stood as prominent landmarks to guide to the locality. Where the fretted cornices

and roofs, covered with yellow tiles, marked the imperial dwellings and great audience hall, nothing but blackened ruins remained. I wandered along the causeway that forms the road between the gardens and the city, but failed to distinguish any building like the one I was in search of. On entering some of the houses I found them deserted, so that I could gain no intelligence by making inquiries. I was on the eve of returning to the camp without my mission being fulfilled, when I saw in the distance a group of people. On coming up to them I observed that they were women and children, praying at one of the public altars by the wayside, evidently beseeching their deities for protection from the "barbarian" invaders, who had so ruthlessly destroyed their sacred Emperor's palace.

As I approached the group of devotees they all ran away screaming, in the direction of the deserted houses, excepting one woman, who remained on her knees before an idol to which she was performing the Ko-tow—literally knocking her head on the stones of the road. At first I thought it was one of the mendicant Buddhist priests, from the head being shaved all over, without a tuft of hair left. On closer inspection I saw that it was a woman, and a nun, who was not prevented from going abroad; and on such occasions usually dressed precisely like the priests of Buddha, and having their heads shaved in the same manner.

She appeared so absorbed in her devotions that she did not observe me until I spoke to her kindly in her own language. She then looked at me, not in the least disconcerted, but without replying.

"Do you belong to a nunnery?" was my first question.

"I do," she said "the nunnery of our Blessed Lady, the Goddess Kwan-yin."

"I want to find such a place, not far from here, perhaps you could direct me to it?"

"Who are you," she replied, "that would desecrate the holy sanctuary of virgins? Surely you and your army may be satisfied with the destruction you have committed and the men you have slain, without seizing helpless women!"

"My good woman, we do not war upon your sex, nor even the men who are peaceable, it is with the Emperor and his Tartar soldiers we fight. Not only that, but we protect women and children in distress. It is for the purpose of seeing a lady whom I rescued from Yuen-ming-yuen, and placed in a nunnery for safety, that I want to find the place."

"Noble barbarian," she said, falling at my feet, "it is you that I have been in search of, day after day, at the request of the fair Loo A-Lee, who longs to see her deliverer again, and to know when she can return to her father in the city. Every day since she came to our sanctuary, I sallied forth to make inquiries when the gates will be opened, and to watch about the neighbourhood for your coming, as she said you promised to do. I know that your presence will make her heart happy and her face glad, so follow me and I will lead you to her."

I rejoiced at this accidental success of my mission so far, and proceeded cheerfully on the way with my nun companion, who proved to be a most intelligent woman, and had evidently belonged to the better class of Chinese. I took the opportunity of obtaining some information concerning this nunnery. I knew something of the goddess Kwan-yin, from what Fan-a-wye had told me on board the Jupiter, and found his statements verified by this female, who devoted her life to the service of that duty.

"The full appellation of the goddess," she said, "is Kwan-she-yin, signifying, 'observer of the cries of the world.' She extends her gracious patronage to all who, in trouble and difficulty, raise the cry for compassion; and she is the special patroness of women who invoke her most frequently in favour of frail humanity."

As to the reason why she became a nun, and what the duties of nuns were, I gleaned the following particulars:—In her youth she had been betrothed, but her intended husband met with an untimely death, while she was nineteen years of age. She then entered the Kwan-yin nunnery, and took upon herself the vows of perpetual maidenhood. The great allurements presented to the mind of the aspirant who would consecrate herself to the altar of this goddess, is the absorption after death into the unknown Buddha—a matter which, the more mysteriously it is represented to the mind of the credulous candidate, the more taking it becomes. This personal advantage is held out by the institution, to facilitate the succession of an order of priestesses. But there are some who are dedicated by their parents from their birth to the service of this duty. When the case is optional, as it was in her instance, it arises often from having been thwarted in some of their prospects and wishes.

When we reached the entrance to the convent we were freely admitted, and I was kindly welcomed by the head priestess. She led me into the apartment where my prize from Yuen-ming-yuen was seated on a bamboo couch, surrounded by a number of novices, or juvenile nuns. She rose at my entrance, while the young girls made their exit, leaving the abbess behind. The greeting between us was cordial, not to say affectionate. It is true that we had seen very little of each other, and there was a great disparity

between the two races from whence we had sprung, but true love is no respecter of persons or nationalities, and in this instance it was abundantly evident that a reciprocal affection had arisen in our hearts.

During the conversation that followed I had a good opportunity of observing the face and figure of Loo A-Lee. In the north of China, where the winter is rigorous, both males and females have a much fairer complexion than those in the south, and many women and children have naturally rosy cheeks. In these respects she had a complexion as fair as the ordinary run of her sisters in England. Neither were her eyes so acute in the angle of the eyelids as we see Chinese eyes generally represented—which is, however, considered a mark of beauty in China. She had exquisitely arched eyebrows, and her hair was softer and not so jet black as usual. Her hands were delicately small, and her feet were of the natural size, not having been bandaged into a stump. She was tall, and graceful in her movements, and would have appeared the belle of an English drawing-room.

I told her that the An-ting gate was in possession of the Allies, but no person was allowed to go in or out, until the ambassadors had negotiated terms of peace with the government. This would probably happen in a few days, when I would visit the convent again and escort her into the city, obtaining a pass for her safe conduct through the camp. She thanked me for this offer, and said she would be ready at any time to leave.

As so good an opportunity might not have occurred again of seeing the interior of a Chinese nunnery, I asked the abbess to show me through it, and to explain the regulations of the order. She assented, and frankly told me all

about the institution and its government, which is by no means so strict as those of Romish convents. The candidates are not admitted into full orders until they attain the age of sixteen. Prior to this, and from the commencement of their ascetic life, they assume the garb peculiar to the sisterhood. The chief apparent distinction between the novices and those in full orders, is that the heads of the latter are wholly shaven, while the former have only the front part of the crown shaven. The younger nuns have plaited queues flowing down behind. The nuns mostly had large feet, clumsy shoes, long stockings and garters, full trousers, short jackets, and wide sleeves, with bald pates and skull-caps, precisely as the priests have. But the priestesses had smoother countenances, softer looks, sweeter voices, and were more tidy.

When the young woman has bared, or shaved her head—a sign of making religious vows very different from that of “taking the veil” adopted in the nunneries of Europe—she is required to live a life of devotion and mortification. She must eat and drink sparingly, and her diet must consist of vegetables only. Strong meats and drinks are to be avoided as poison. The business and cares of this world are not to engross her attention. She has retired from it, and must be fitting herself for eternal canonisation. Nothing should occupy her thoughts or engage her affections but the service of the temple in the precincts of which she lives. Daily exercises are to be conducted by her, the furniture of the small sanctuary that forms a part of the convent must be looked after and kept clean and orderly; those women or men who come to worship at the altars, and seek guidance or comfort, must be cared for and assisted. When there is leisure the sick and the poor are

to be visited, and all who have placed themselves under her special direction and spiritual instruction have a large claim upon her regard. That she may live the life of seclusion and self-denial she must vow perpetual maidenhood; the thought of marriage should never enter her head, and the society of men must be shunned.

As far as I could see these rigid rules were not seriously complied with, and there appeared no great amount of devotion at their religious exercises, especially among the novices. Their sacred books consisted of many volumes, printed in large text on fine paper. For these they had a profound respect. The rapidity with which the pages and sections of the books were hurried off at their religious exercises was amazing. Both the young and the old nuns seemed equally expert at their recitations, but there was nothing of a devotional spirit about them; their demeanour was anything but devout. I was shocked to see the levity of the juvenile nuns in paying religious homage to the goddess Kwan-yin; they were as merry and tricky, as flirting and frolicsome, as any party of girls met to keep the birthday of one of their schoolmates.

Before leaving the nunnery I bade Loo A-Lee an affectionate good-bye, to which she made a gentle response; so that I wended on my way to the camp with a beating heart, but full of pleasant emotions.





CHAPTER IX.

Burial of the murdered victims.—Triumphal Entry of the Allied Forces into Peking.—Signing the Treaty and Convention at the Hall of Ceremonies.—The Prince of Kung.—Lord Elgin declines his invitation to dinner for fear of poison.



MEANWHILE a solemn act was performed by the British and French Ambassadors in consigning the remains of their murdered countrymen and faithful Indian troopers to the tomb. The Russian Embassy at Peking had given permission in the kindest manner that their burial ground should be used for the interment of those unfortunate victims of Chinese treachery and barbarity. The French had no need to accept the Russians' offer. An old Roman Catholic cemetery, constructed when the Jesuits were at the height of their power in Peking, some centuries back, lay within the west wall, and to the plot of earth within its precincts they consigned their dead. The bodies of the Sikhs were handed over to their comrades, and were by them burnt to ashes, as is their custom.

The Russian burial-ground is outside the north wall of the city, about a quarter of a mile from it. The funeral was an impressive sight. Lord Elgin and Sir Hope Grant were the chief mourners. Every one made a point of attending, as it was a gratification to the feelings of all to show the

last tribute of respect to the memory of the departed, and to mark their sympathy with the cruel fate which had carried them away in the midst of a career of usefulness and honour; nor was there less sympathy for the private soldier than for his superior.

"What mysterious purpose was answered by the sacrifice of so many valuable lives," remarked the Rev. Mr. McGhee, Chaplain of the British Forces, "and so much misery both to the sufferers and those left behind, can only be known to that wise and merciful Power which rules the affairs of men, and without whom 'a sparrow does not fall to the ground.' We may be sure that some dire necessity existed which was not to be averted, or the God of mercy would not have permitted his servants to fall into the hands of such wretches."

That clergyman read the funeral service, as principal chaplain, and the priest of the Russian church having requested him to be permitted to take part in the service, bore the cross, the emblem of the faith of Christ, at the graves, while the service was being read. When that was over he was glad to say, "that the friends of those whose fate it has been to take their last earthly rest here, may feel secure that the remains of those whom they loved, and still love, will rest in peace till that great day when earth and sea shall alike yield up the dead that they have hidden, at the voice of Him who has 'redeemed us and washed us in His blood,' when time shall be no more. May we meet them in peace through Him who has 'made peace by the blood of the Cross.'" A universal response of "Amen" was murmured by that warlike throng, and many a stern warrior's eyes glistened with tears at the close of the service.

Winter was fast drawing on; each morning was ushered

in by a hard frost, with its coverlet of snow daintily spread on the tops of the semicircular range of hills ; and though the sun continued to rise and pursue his course each day through a clear unsullied sky, yet the chilling air began to affect the health of the Indian troopers and their Arab horses. It was, therefore, with no small delight that the allied army hailed the prospect of peace, and a speedy termination to the privations of camp life.

Although the sacking and burning of the imperial palaces at Yuen-ming-yuen was considered as the act of an avenging Nemesis for the foul deeds the Emperor and his cruel satraps had committed, yet it was resolved that a money compensation of a hundred thousand pounds should be demanded from the Chinese on behalf of the surviving sufferers and the relatives of the murdered victims. Lord Elgin therefore gave Prince Kung to understand that unless the money was forthcoming on a certain day, and peace at once concluded by a convention and ratification of the treaty of Tien-tsin, the army would attack the imperial palace inside Peking, and compel the Chinese government to come to terms. Up to the morning of the day named no reply was given. The troops were already detailed for the attack, and the guns placed in position to open fire on the city, when a countermanding order was issued. Lord Elgin's threat had wrung the necessary reply at the eleventh hour, and everything was ceded which his ultimatum demanded. The Prince was true to his word, and the indemnity was paid on the appointed day. The ratification of the British treaty and signature of the convention was appointed for the day following.

The hall selected for this important ceremony was that pertaining to the Imperial Board of Ceremonies. The two

principal interpreters were entrusted with the arrangement of the hall and with the settlement of points of etiquette. It was arranged that the British commissioner should be the first to enter the city with his retinue, and the French plenipotentiary, Baron Gros, the day afterwards. Accordingly on the afternoon of the appointed day, the procession attending Lord Elgin entered the capital of China through the An-ting gate.

A detachment of cavalry led the way, followed by detachments of the various infantry regiments, with two regimental bands which continued playing alternately the whole distance. Then came sundry officers on foot, followed by others on horseback. The general and his staff came next, immediately preceding Lord Elgin, who was seated in a green sedan-chair, carried by sixteen chair-bearers. His staff rode on either side, and the rear was brought up by more detachments of infantry and cavalry. As the procession entered the gate, the French guard on the left side turned out and saluted their brethren in arms, the band striking up "God save the Queen." When the procession was within the walls, the troops marched through the main street between a double line of infantry amounting to two thousand men, who fell in at the rear, forming altogether an imposing force of eight thousand men and officers—a victorious army marching through the capital of a nation boasting of a population equal to one-third of the human race. It was a proud day for the victors and a day of humiliation for the vanquished; especially the imperious ruler Hien-fung. Notwithstanding the effeminacy and cruelty of that monarch, he felt the disgrace that had come upon his dynasty keenly, as he sickened and died before the next anniversary of that day.

For some three miles the procession marched through the northern section of Peking, or what is called the Tartar city, to an inner wall dividing it from the Chinese city. In the centre of the former stands the imperial residence, and the government offices. Before reaching this point the troops filed off to the right and left, leaving a passage for Lord Elgin's chair up to the entrance of the Hall of Ceremonies where there was a spacious courtyard. Here the Chinese stood on the left side and the British to the right. Prince Kung and numerous mandarins were already waiting in the open hall which stood at the other end of the courtyard. As his lordship advanced up the avenue, the troops presented arms and the band saluted him with the national anthem. The Earl then walked to the farther end of the hall, and took the seat of honour prepared for him, at the same time motioning the Prince to take the lower seat on his right, about fifteen feet off. A table covered with red cloth stood before each. Sir Hope Grant sat on Lord Elgin's left, and, ranged behind a row of tables down the hall on the left, sat and stood the other officers that were present at the ceremony. Behind similar tables on the right were ranged native princes and mandarins of every class of nobility.

Prince Kung—a cadaverous-looking young man of twenty-three, with a long, pale, smooth-shaven face—bore a timid, sulky demeanour throughout the ceremony, and answered snappishly to the questions put by the interpreters. He was dressed in a long purple damasked silk robe, with a round dragon flowered piece of embroidery on each shoulder, breast, and back, and on his head he wore the winter official cap, but with a button of twisted red silk instead of the various mineral buttons that decorate mandarins. A neck-

lace of carved beads hung round his neck. His nether garments were of the imperial yellow colour, and his boots of embroidered satin.

After the signature of the convention followed the exchange of the ratifications of the treaty of Tien-tsin, entered into two years before. These documents bound the Chinese to open several new ports to British commerce, and to pay an indemnity equivalent to two millions sterling for the expenses of the war. Terms of the same character were concluded with the French afterwards. A minute recording the exchange of ratifications was then drawn up in duplicate, and being signed and sealed by the plenipotentiaries, one copy was given to Lord Elgin and the other to Prince Kung. So soon as the business was concluded Lord Elgin took his leave, accompanied by the procession as before, and the guns on the An-ting gate announced to the world that peace had been concluded between Great Britain and China.

"The scene was interesting," says Mr. Swinhoe, "but there was little appearance of that oriental magnificence which one would be led to expect on such an occasion in the capital of a vast Eastern empire, in an assembly of her princes and nobles. The old hall bore the stamp of neglect and decay of the thousand and one other public buildings in Peking, and the tapestry that hung from the unceiled roof was of cheap stuff and faded; the Chinese grandees were themselves dirty and badly dressed. These last, however, probably looked worse than they actually were, as the overwhelming dust of the roads through which they had passed may have diminished the gloss of their multi-coloured apparel. It certainly had not tended to improve the appearance of our people."



PRINCE KUNG.
(Uncle of the Emperor Tung-Che.)

After the ceremony the Prince of Kung proposed to give a banquet to Lord Elgin and the principal officers; but this was declined, as it was still feared that the treachery of the Chinese might find vent in poisoning the food. The French, however, accepted a banquet after the ceremony on the following day, when it was said that the Prince was in better spirits. That same day Lord Elgin took up his quarters inside the Tartar town, in the palace of the haughty Prince of E. The royal regiment accompanied him as body-guard.

A sense of relief was felt throughout the allied army, from the highest functionary or general, to the lowest private or menial in the two camps, at this satisfactory conclusion of the North-China campaign. All the troops were now anxious to proceed southwards to obtain proper shelter during the rigorous winter that had by this time fairly set in.





CHAPTER X.

The Mandarin's Daughter leaves the Nunnery.—The Abbess begs for donations.—Curious customs between the Nuns and Visitors.—Loo A-Lee escorted on the way, tells who her father is.—She arrives safe at his house.

PEACE being now restored, the gates of Peking were thrown open to the free ingress and egress of natives and foreigners. Great was the throng at all the entrances on the opening day. The Chinese who had deserted their houses in the suburbs to take refuge within the walls of the city at the commencement of hostilities, were now flocking out to visit their homes, and see if the "barbarians" had plundered them. As it was necessary for any one wishing to visit the city to have a pass, there were not many belonging to the army who obtained admittance the first day. I was among the few who applied and secured the necessary order, and went in search of my fair prize at the nunnery, to escort her into the city. This time there was no difficulty in finding the place, and I was heartily welcomed by the Abbess and Loo A-Lee. They had heard of the settlement of affairs, and rejoiced at the cessation of hostilities. On enquiry, I found that the chair and the two chair-bearers who had brought my fair charge from Yuen-ming-yuen, were still in

the convent. Accordingly orders were given to prepare for their departure to the city.

While these preparations were going on, the head priestess improved the occasion to do something in the begging way for the pecuniary benefit of the institution. She conducted me to the shrine of the goddess Kwan-yin, and showed me, on the walls behind it, several large tablets, on which were inscribed the names of donors who had contributed money for the maintenance of the order. Sometimes, she said, the contributions were in kind, so that, with the subscriptions of steady friends and the donations of occasional visitors, they managed to obtain the means of subsistence. She then pointed to the name of Loo A-Lee as a substantial donor, and hoped that "His Excellency" would follow her example, I gave a hearty laugh at the ingenious way in which the old lady had broached the subject, and as I had intended to contribute to the funds of the convent, I put some dollars in my pocket for that purpose, also to pay the chair-bearers. Her eyes glistened with delight when I placed a handful of bright Mexican dollars on the shrine, before which she prostrated herself and performed the Ko-tow, by knocking her head nine times on its base, saying that this was another instance of the gracious patronage of Kwan-yin, who influenced the stranger to aid in supporting her poor devotees.

Seeing several men as well as women conversing with the nuns and priestess in the temple, I enquired what they were there for, in a place dedicated to celibacy. She informed me that these were people from the country, who had put themselves under the spiritual direction of the nuns, in whom they confided as teachers, and submitted to them as priestesses. Whether the devotee be a man or a

woman, the nun who is the chosen preceptress gives to the individual a *new name*. On that and every other occasion when they visit the nunnery, they pay a small sum to their female confessor, so that the more disciples she has the richer she becomes. On learning this I could not help thinking there was more regard for the loaves and fishes among these priestesses than the faith they professed. This supposition was verified by Loo A-Lee, whom I questioned on the subject after we had left the place. However, she said, "the superioress is a most avaricious woman, who assumes an appearance of paying great attention to her visitors where she expects to get most money. When I left the palace I brought many valuables with me, and I was afraid she might rob me of them. But I was very careful to hide them, and hope, under your protection, I may bring them safely home to my father."

"You may depend upon my protection; I will take care that no one shall harm you on the way. But tell me," I continued, "what is your father, and where are you likely to find him in the city?"

"My father," she modestly replied, "is what you foreigners call a Mandarin of the fifth grade, and is attached to the Board of Rites and Ceremonies. He lives in the Tartar portion of the city, not far from the great hall connected with the Board."

"Then I know where that is; for it was there that the ceremony was performed when concluding peace, and I marched in the procession accompanying our noble Envoy. But how was it, think you, that he did not come to Yuen-ming-yuen and fetch you home?"

"Perhaps he imagined that I got safely away with the Empress's attendants to Je-hol. This no doubt would have

been the case if she had gone there when the Emperor fled. But from the secret and sudden manner in which her Majesty took her departure, with only one confidential maid of honour, all of us who were left behind are of opinion that she did not accompany her husband, but remains in seclusion in the imperial palace at Peking, to aid Prince Kung, her brother-in-law, in managing affairs of state during the Emperor's absence. She is a woman of great intelligence, and better able to govern the nation than her husband. I know that she counselled him to make peaceful terms with your great men, and not to torture the prisoners at Yuen-ming-yuen. But he was inexorable, and the consequences, alas! are that he had to fly for safety, while the palaces have been destroyed where I have spent so many happy years of my life."

Saying this she became sad, and mourned over the past. "Cheer up, Loo A-Lee," I said in the best Chinese I could command; "it is all for our good. The day may not be far distant when both you and I shall rejoice over the circumstances that have brought us together."

In encouraging conversation of this kind, I soon restored her to a happier frame of mind, until we reached the British lines before the northern walls of Peking, when I deemed it judicious to close the blinds of the sedan chair, so that the prying eyes of my comrades might not see my fair companion within. As it was, the idlers about the camp chaffed me considerably, for they conjectured that the inmate of the chair was a female. When we reached the An-ting gate the sentry challenged our party, but when I exhibited my pass we were allowed to enter the city.

As we passed along the main street, it was so densely crowded that I got jostled on the way as I walked on the

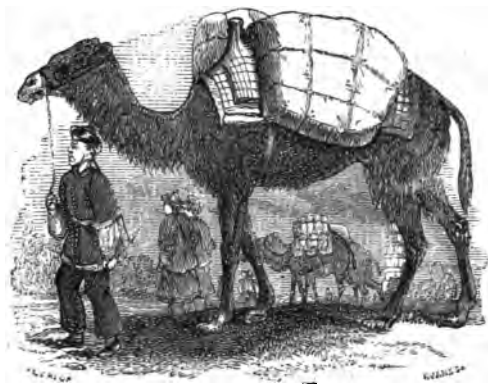
right side of the chair. But this I found was a common practice of the Chinese, as I had often to make my way along the thoroughfare by holding up a stick in front of the passengers' faces, to make them keep to one side. However, as I was doing a delicate duty, and not wishing to get into trouble, I walked behind the chair with my sword over the left arm, and revolver handy to the right side.

From the gates of Peking we passed along a wide street that leads through the Tartar district of the city, having other streets equally wide crossing it at right angles. The houses were all one-storied, and not in good order. There were shops of all sorts, with open fronts, or windows of close lattice, covered with thin white paper on the inside; from butchers, who dealt in raw meat, as at home, in carcasses, chiefly mutton and pork, to "chow-chow" shops, where meat pies were made and dressed. Then came hat shops, grocers' shops, ready-made clothes' shops, druggists, and the hundred-and-one trades that go to supply the necessities of a large city. Numerous customers were buying, and the hum and bustle reminded me of the busy streets in the east end of London.

The whole of the central causeway was occupied by a dense moving mass, composed of operatives in every department of active life. Tinkers, cobblers, blacksmiths, barbers, were there with their locomotive shops; and booths and tents were erected on the kerb of the footway for the sale of tea, fruit, rice, and vegetables, so that little space remained for foot-passengers. There were public officers with their retinues bearing canopies, lanterns, flags; and numerous insignia of rank and station; coffins attended by mourners clad in white; and brides conveyed in glittering palanquins, the cries of sorrow from one procession being occasionally

drowned by the shouts of exultation and peals of music that ascended from the other. Mixed with these were troops of camels or dromedaries led by their drivers from the country, laden with produce; besides wheelbarrows, and hand-carts, and an immense concourse, literally struggling for liberty to go in pursuit of their ways or their wants.

After passing through this great thoroughfare the chair-bearers turned into a comparatively quiet street, where there



CAMELS AND DRIVERS.

were scarcely any shops or stalls. This was the street leading to the government offices, and the houses are chiefly the residences of officials. Very little of these dwellings was visible from the road, as they were mostly surrounded by high brick walls. It was only when abreast of the entrance gates that a glimpse of the buildings within could be obtained.

At length we stopped at one of these gates of ornamental trellis-work, and the front chair-bearer knocked for admit-

tance. A doorkeeper seated inside, smoking his long-stemmed brass pipe, undid the bars, and the sedan-chair was carried into the vestibule. As I was about to follow, the porter was going to close the gates in my face, but a sweet voice from the chair ordered him to forbear. He recognised his young mistress's voice, and with a smile and a bow allowed me to enter.

From the vestibule we went through an intricate dark passage, which led to an open court, or rather garden, with ornamental rockwork, water, and flowers. Around were the apartments appropriated exclusively to the accomodation of the family. Here the sedan-chair was set down, and Loo A-Lee stepped out, ordering the chair-bearers to proceed to the kitchen for some refreshment.

"Welcome, noble stranger," she then said, "to my father's house! When he knows how bravely you have rescued me from the doomed palace of Yuen-ming-yuen, he will be more profound in thanks than I, but he cannot feel so grateful as I do for your protection and kindness. And now I must go and see if my father is at home. I am afraid he is not, for he should have made his appearance by this time. Indeed, I fear there is something wrong in the house, for it seems so deserted. Wait here until I return," and with that she entered one of the apartments.

I sat down on a porcelain seat in the garden, before a table of the same ware, and did not wait long before Loo A-Lee returned with an old duenna, stating that her father and friends were in great tribulation as to her safety, and had that day gone out to search for her, but had not yet come back. After obtaining some refreshments I bade her adieu, and hastened back to the camp, passing the city gates just before they were closed.



CHAPTER XI.

Antiquity of Chinese Architecture.—Charming appearance of the Mandarin's Daughter in her own home.—My reception by her father and relations.—Interesting conversation on social life in China.—An entertainment as among the upper classes.—Dinner with theatrical performance.

ACCORDING to promise, I paid a visit next day to the Mandarin's house. On that occasion I had an opportunity of examining more minutely its internal arrangements, as affording a most satisfactory idea of the mode of living prevalent in China. I was struck with the remarkable resemblance between the plan of the building, and the domestic architecture of the ancient Greeks and Romans as illustrated in the exhumed houses of Pompeii. That the Chinese did not import their notions from Europe may be unhesitatingly admitted; whence it follows, there exists at the present day in China, in all its primitive truthfulness, the same description of dwelling, and probably nearly similar habits of life, which are regarded with so much wonder in the crumbling fragments of the buried city. Not only is this the case with the styles of building, but there is a similarity in their furnishings, ornaments and culinary utensils, which is also remarkable. And when it is remembered that this mode of building and style of living is as ancient as those in the

extinct cities of the Roman Empire, China may be appropriately designated *a living antiquity*.

I had been informed by some of the learned linguists accompanying the army, who had been many years in China, that the ancient model of a Chinese house, or rather cluster of houses was that of the Tartar tent, with upturned corners, and then forming squares in an encampment with their entrance doors turned inwards was the plan for a court-yard or garden. As their skill in architecture progressed, the eaves were ornamented with scroll work and the representation of animals and flowers. Then the doorways and windows presented a field for originality of design; and therein the Chinese, like the ancient Greeks and Romans, studied nature for outline and ornamentation. Among the earliest designs for the entrances to apartments, and the inner windows, the shapes were copied from flowers, leaves, and other objects.

When I returned to the Mandarin's house, I could not help noticing that although the entrances to the inner apartments were of various forms, not one of them was square-shaped. Some were oval, round, or hexagon; others the form of a jar or a bottle; but the prettiest designs were copied from different kinds of fruit, with the stalks and leaves pierced in the walls overhead as a fanlight. Then the windows were in the form of the tea-blossom, the lotus-flower, and the camellia; also those of butterflies and birds. From their peculiar shapes there were no wooden doors or window-frames, but heavy curtains could be drawn to exclude the cold air.

It was a bright sunny afternoon, and the taste and design of the architecture of the houses and the pretty gardens they overlooked—so different from anything of the kind in Europe—perfectly realized what I had seen depicted on

Chinese ware. At home one's gardens are all outside the houses, but here there were miniature gardens inside as well. It appeared to me a beautiful though quaint conception to have the daughters of the "Great Flowery Land," entering a doorway cut in the form of some kind of fruit, and looking through a window like a water-lily, gazing outside on the garden with its tiny lake, rockery, and zig-zag bridges, blooming everywhere with flowers, watered by artificial falls, and exhibiting in miniature a landscape of magnificent scenery.

I had not long to wait in seeing the reality of my ideal picture, for the object of my affection appeared in all her grace and beauty, at one of the fanciful entrances shaped like a pear, as if she was a native goddess enshrined in the luscious fruit. I quickly ascended the steps, and embraced Loo A-Lee with fervour, which she in no way resisted, but received kindly with a modest smile. To me she now looked more beautiful than ever, as there was no trace of anxiety in her countenance to dim its natural radiance.

When Loo A-Lee appeared, her beauty was set off to greater advantage than before by the elegance of her dress and toilet. She wore a long loose jacket, with a tunic under it, and wide trousers. These were made of rich-coloured silk and black satin, most elaborately embroidered. The tunic buttoned round the neck and down the side; the jacket had very wide sleeves, which were of silk lined with satin, turned up, and embroidered with coloured threads in flowery designs. The trousers were covered with a petticoat which was drawn close at the bottom, exposing her small natural-shaped feet, encased in pretty shoes. She wore heavy gold bracelets, and several brilliant rings shone upon her fingers. Her ear-rings were long and valuable, and her

head-dress was studded with precious stones, the hair being done up in the form of a butterfly. But the great beauty of her dress was the arrangement of the parts, and the assortment of the colours was perfect. She appeared a Chinese belle of the first water, whom a native poet thus describes:—"Her cheeks are like the almond flower, her lips like the peach blossom, her waist as the willow leaf, her eyes bright and dancing as ripples in the sun, and her footsteps like the lotus-flower."

Seeing that my fair one had dressed herself in her best attire to greet me, I was glad that I had also put on my full dress uniform on the occasion. However, I unbuckled my sword, and left it with my shako on one of the tables outside, before entering the inner apartments. My lovely conductor led me through the first room to one further on, which overlooked a part of the imperial gardens. It was more like an open verandah than an apartment, with doorway at one side shaped like a cornucopia. I was rather embarrassed at first to see that there were a number of people in the place, both male and female.

"This is my father," said Loo A-Lee, introducing a tall, middle-aged person, who came forward from the company which was assembled, with a commanding presence, and a face more expressive than is usual among the Chinese. Then turning to her father, she said, "This is the noble stranger who rescued me from the palace of Yuen-ming-yuen, and protected me on my way home. He understands our language, so that you may speak your mind freely to him."

Then the stately mandarin made a step forward, bowing three times, and clasping his hands, saying, "Tsing-tso!" (Please to be seated); whereupon both of us sat down on handsomely-carved chairs of Sapan-wood.

"What is your honourable surname?" he asked.

"Thank you!" I replied, adopting the Chinese idiom; "my surname is Ca-me-la."

"And my mean surname is Loo. I trust you are very well."

Here a servant entered with a tray full of teacups exquisitely painted, each having a lid to keep in the fragrance of the beverage, which is always drunk in China without sugar or cream.

"Please take some tea," my host said, politely, handing a cup, which I accepted with thanks.

After these usual salutations were over, the mandarin proceeded to state that he supposed his daughter had gone to Je-hol in the empress's retinue, until one of her late companions who was able to reach the city informed him of the sudden departure of her majesty with only one attendant, leaving her other maids of honour behind, among whom was Loo A-Lee. By this time the city gates were closed, and he could not get out to search for her, and even if he had done so he was afraid of being taken prisoner. Then his duties at the Board of Ceremonies required him to attend at the signing of the convention and ratification of the treaty. But as soon as the gates were open he went forth to make inquiries, and his apprehensions were set at rest when he called at the Kwan-yin nunnery, where he received tidings of her safety, and of her return home.

"Not only do I thank you for your brave and honourable conduct, but all who are here assembled, as relations and connections of our family, join me in expressing their gratitude, and my daughter will not be the least grateful of all."

Thereupon the whole company arose, and bowed three

times, in the same manner that the mandarin had done. Then some of the ladies came forward, begging my acceptance of some presents they had brought with them. I then stood up, and said, "Sir, I thank you, your daughter, and these your relatives, for this kind expression of goodwill to me, a stranger, and one who was lately fighting against your government. But know this, that it is the duty, as well as the inclination, of a British soldier to protect a lady in distress. I consider myself to have been so fortunate as to lend assistance to your daughter, and hope I shall have the high honour of seeing you often while I remain in this great city."

A buzz of approbation followed this little speech, and the mandarin said I should be always welcome, adding, "But you will stay with us and partake of our humble entertainment in honour of the safe return home of my daughter."

I could not but accept this kind invitation; indeed, had anticipated something of the sort, and had obtained leave of absence from the camp that night, making arrangements with the guard at the An-ting gate to put up at their quarters.

It may be readily supposed that I was an object of curiosity to that Chinese company, especially to the ladies, most of whom had never seen a European before. First the men came up, and in the most inquisitive but polite manner examined my uniform. The buttons, the epaulets, sash, and the texture of the cloth were expatiated on by each person; even my boots underwent a close scrutiny. Then came the ladies, young and old, who displayed no backwardness in looking up in my face and making their comments on my features. Being of a fair complexion and light brown hair, with a fine flowing beard, these seemed to

please their fancy, and some of the girls who had hold of my hands showed how fair my skin was above the wrists, which is considered a sign of high breeding among the Chinese. But what struck them as most peculiar were my blue eyes, which are unknown amongst that multitudinous



CHINESE LADIES.

race. One of the old ladies thought that these were a blemish on my features, but the young ladies, including Loo A-Lee, declared that they were like *Tien* (heaven).

Looking around I could not but admire the quaint yet picturesque aspect of the domestic scene; which was so different from anything I had seen before, that I could

scarcely persuade myself that it was a living reality. The young girls were very tastefully dressed. A graceful jacket reaching to the knee, and wide coloured trousers formed the outline. Their shoes were mostly of black satin and richly embroidered. They evidently paid great attention to their raven-black hair; and decorated their heads with flowers of brilliant colours. Most of them had their hair gathered into a knot at the right side, and I was told that this and their style of dress indicated that they were not yet betrothed. Thus from the dainty little foot to the head all was nicely arranged, and pleasant they looked as they tripped about the room.

Still with all this grace of figure I could not admire their cramped feet, which gives the matronly ladies especially a most ungainly waddle in walking. In the young girls it was not so much so on account of the flexibility of their limbs. This custom I was informed was not followed by the Tartar ladies in rearing their children, and hence the Mandarin's Daughter, whose mother belonged to that race—though her father was of pure Chinese descent—had never been subjected to the painful practice in her infancy. My informant further stated that this was considered one of the most important duties of a Chinese mother towards her female off-spring. The custom began some nine centuries ago, during the reign of a pure Chinese emperor. This monarch had a favourite wife possessing remarkably small feet. They just covered the flower of the golden lily, and when walking in her garden she was accustomed to step on them. Hence small feet are called "golden lilies;" and they have ever since become a prominent point of female beauty, and where nature has denied the delicacy, force has been employed to produce it.

At first there was an air of quietness amongst the party, but now that the first ceremonies of introduction were over, all of them, young and old, chatted and laughed with the greatest glee. While the mandarin and his daughter were superintending the preparations for the feast in a hall adjoining the reception-room, the guests gave themselves up to lively conversation and merriment. I inquired if the host's wife was alive, and heard that she was not, and that Loo A-Lee was the only female member of his family.

On questioning my affable informant as to their manners and customs, I found that education is universally considered necessary in the case of boys, but is sparingly enjoyed by their sisters. While all admit it to be indispensable to advancement, and to the daily business of life in reference to the one sex, they deny the utility to the other; and "this is not so much for the want of affection for our girls as from a sense of its uselessness. Some parents, however, are of a different opinion, and provide learned ladies to instruct their daughters. Such was the case with Meng-kee and his deceased wife, who gave A-Lee a course of instruction not much inferior to that of a learned Han-lin scholar. It was in consequence of her learning, and not having cramped feet, that our host's daughter obtained the post of an attendant on the empress, who is a woman of great wisdom, and will have no cramped-footed women in her retinue, she also herself having her feet of the natural shape."

This was interesting information to me, as I had hitherto refrained from delicacy to question my fair lady as to her antecedents. I observed that the speaker named both father and daughter without prefixing the family surname Loo. This is the custom among relatives, just as in Europe

we use Christian names among families, while surnames are generally used between those who are not relations. In selecting names for females, they are not chosen from an understood category, as Mary or Jane, but are at the option of the schoolmistress. They are fanciful, but pretty, and to my delight I ascertained that A-Lee signified "Bright Pearl."

Here the mandarin entered the apartment, followed by his daughter, behind whom came a number of female attendants, who separated, each one standing behind the chair of her mistress. These servants were all under eighteen years of age, and were the daughters of poor people, who had sold them into a kind of slavery, which ceases after they attain that age; so that they are pawned, as it were, by their parents, who have not the trouble of feeding or clothing them during their girlhood, while they receive a small premium of fifteen or twenty dollars from the master of the family where they are employed. "The rights of these girls," said my communicative neighbour, "are clearly defined in our code of laws, and strictly attended to. They have a full claim to all the clothes they have received during the whole period of their service, and retain them when they return to their parents. They may be redeemed at any time on payment of the original premium, and some other stipulations. Fines and punishments are imposed on their masters if they are cruelly treated, and mistresses are commanded to treat them with clemency."

This interesting conversation was interrupted by the striking of a gong in the outer hall, which commenced with slow and light blows and gradually increased in rapidity and loudness, until the whole establishment resounded with reverberations which culminated in several loud and distinct

blows, when it ceased. Then a number of male servants lined the doorway, and the mandarin, with stately demeanour, led the way to the dining-hall, the gentlemen first and the ladies afterwards. When they entered the hall the master of the house took his seat on an arm-chair in the middle of a crescent-shaped table, and his guests were ranged in chairs at a lower level on each side; the post of honour on his left, according to Chinese etiquette, being given to me.



CHINESE LADY PLAYING THE GUITAR.

The gentlemen sat only on one side of the table, on its outer edge, the opposite side having no chairs, with an open space behind hung with splendid lanterns and drapery. At the left extremity of the table was a raised platform, on which numerous small tables with chairs stood. Here the ladies seated themselves, and from their elevation could overlook the great table and its occupants. Before each guest were several small porcelain dishes, reminding one of

the toy dishes children have at home when "playing at dinner." Each person had brought his own "nimblelads," or chopsticks, which he took out of a case hung at his belt, some of them being made of ivory, and mounted with gold and precious stones. The host had provided a knife and fork for me, but I said that I would use a pair of chopsticks in preference, which pleased both host and company.

Among the first courses placed upon the table were soups and made dishes, which included the famous "bird's-nest soup." It was clear and gelatinous, with poached plovers' eggs in it. There was rice on the table, but many helped themselves to rich cakes and sweetmeats while partaking of the rich soups and stews. There was no salt, but there were plenty of highly-salted sauces within reach. Into these the diners deftly dipped their chopsticks with a piece of meat—such as roast pork cut up into small pieces—and holding a small plate or dish of rice in their left hands, conveyed the dripping morsel over it to their mouths.

Then followed a course, the *pièces de resistance* of which were ducks and fowls, out of which every bone had been extracted before cooking. Consequently there was no necessity to carve them with knives, for the juicy meat yielded easily to the pinching of the chopsticks. The only appearance of a carver's duties was by the person sitting opposite one of these dishes helping his neighbours. Not only was this performed by his kinsmen, but by the mandarin, and when he wished to show a special mark of favour to any of his guests, he would send portions of his own *recherché* dishes to them. I came in for these attentions frequently, and once my little porcelain ladle had several ducks' tongues dropped into it, taken from a dish containing at least fifty of these minute delicacies.

During the courses the servants brought round a native wine something like sherry, which was quite hot, in a teapot, and was poured out into cups. Besides this wine, several kinds of spirituous liquors were brought in, apparently all distilled from rice, and called *sam-shoo*, resembling sweetened gin. While drinking this, one guest would challenge another, repeating a rhyme until one of them made a mistake, when he was obliged to drain his cup. Then the host drained a bumper of rose-coloured wine to his foreign guest, which example was followed by all present, and had I responded to each I should have soon been tipsy, but I contended myself by drinking a toast in good old English fashion, first thanking my host for his hospitality, his kinsmen for their attention, and last, though not least, the ladies, including especially the beautiful and accomplished Loo A-Lee, the "Bright Pearl" of Peking.

It is difficult to say how long my eloquence would have continued had I not observed some movement on the floor in the vacant space before the table, which brought the speech to a close. This movement was the entrance of some singers and performers, to commence a kind of play for the entertainment of the company. It was different from the public theatricals, where no women appear on the stage, the female characters being performed by young men. In this case they were all females, some dressed in male attire, and the performance was accompanied by some who played upon lutes and guitars, which produced a twang not much louder than that from a toy fiddle in this country. However, the entertainment seemed to please the audience, and in token of their approbation the host and his friends threw money on to the stage, an example which I naturally followed.

During the performance, dessert of fruit and sweetmeats was served up, with tea and other warm beverages, while the conversation went on all the time without much heed being given to the play, except by the ladies, the younger portion of whom expressed their enjoyment of it in audible terms. However, the utmost decorum prevailed during the evening, and when it was time to depart, the most cordial exchange of civilities was evinced by all towards their entertainer and his daughter. On reaching the vestibule quite a crowd of chair-bearers with their chairs filled the place in which the parting guests took their leave. One of them was placed at my disposal, and thus I got safely and comfortably to the guard-house at the An-ting gate, where I took up my quarters for the night.





CHAPTER XII.

Departure of the Allied Forces, excepting a strong garrison at Tien-tsin.—Hard frost set in.—How the Troops fared during the winter.—Abundance of food.—Charity of the soldiers towards the poor.—Native Hospital.—Amusing intercourse between the natives and the soldiers.

NOW that affairs were amicably settled between the Allies and the Chinese Government, it became a question of importance as to how the troops should be disposed of. At first the British envoy and generals thought of wintering the army outside the walls of Peking, but this idea was abandoned from the difficulty of forwarding supplies from Tien-tsin, where the stores and head-quarters of the commissariat had remained behind. It was resolved, therefore, that half of the forces should winter at that city, leaving only a small garrison to protect the legation at Peking, and the remainder leave for Japan and Hong Kong.

The French were the first to take their departure, and they reached Tien-tsin without any collision with the Tartars. They remained but a short time in that city as winter was upon them, when navigation is closed by ice, and they intended to pass the season at the more genial climate of Che-foo. This was managed in good time, when the French fleet sailed with the greater part of their forces for that port.

At the same time Baron Gros, and Lord Elgin, with their suites, and some of the mounted troopers with their horses sailed from the rigorous climate of Northern China for the warm latitudes in the sunny south.

The British troops left to garrison Tien-tsin—about 3,500 strong—now set to work in earnest to make themselves snug for the winter, which had set in with severity. Captain Gordon and myself were actively employed with our company of sappers superintending a large number of Chinese workmen in altering and adapting the native houses—which had been taken at a rent—to the wants of the British soldiers. Soldiers' barracks, first, was the order of the day; nothing to be done for the officers until the soldiers were made comfortable. These alterations were expeditiously carried out, and then the Royal Engineers had active labours to perform during the winter.

The frost soon set in with a severity that is only experienced by our troops when quartered in the Dominion of Canada. Its effects told more upon their health than the sweltering heats of summer. Notwithstanding that every necessary was distributed without stint, still there was always a large number of patients in the hospital. Not only was there abundance of ration food, but game of various kinds could be bought cheap from the natives. Hares and pheasants were so plentiful that they formed a daily portion of the soldiers' mess. "Well, Bill," said one to another, in the hearing of the chaplain, "have you got a good dinner for us to-day?" "No, that I haven't, lad," was the reply; "there ain't nothing but some hare soup and two or three pheasants, and what's the use of that?"

Evidently the men preferred more substantial food in the shape of beef and mutton, and that of the best quality.

One afternoon the Rev. Wm. McGhee saw a young soldier carrying a piece of excellent mutton, asked him if it was ration meat, for that it seemed good. "No Sir," said he, "this is not ration meat, I bought it myself; this is for my supper."

"How is it that you can eat all that along with your rations?"

"Why sir, the fact is, we don't eat our rations, we've got a little dainty like, and our rations is made out of them cows as used to be carrying our baggage all through the campaign, and we finds 'em a little tough and rather strong like now, so the Chinese eats them and we eats this."

In thus parting with these and other portions of their rations the soldiers were very charitable to the Chinese poor; whenever rations were given out, or anything in the shape of eating was going on, the hungry pauper got his share.

Not only was this the case, but both officers and soldiers subscribed a sum of money at Christmas for the poor of Tien-tsin, and it was announced through the British Consul that there would be a distribution of food in honour of the festival. Accordingly a placard was posted inviting pauper women of fifty years of age, and the blind of both sexes, to present themselves at the church (a Confucian temple) on a given day; when, there was such a crowd of recipients— notwithstanding a strong guard of soldiers and of Chinese— some unfortunate women, who could not stand on their wretched cramped feet, were absolutely trampled to death.

Besides these acts of charity a hospital was established by subscription for the natives of the town and district under the able superintendence of Dr. Lamprey. When it got into full operation, one of the leading native practitioners called upon him, with a request that he would accept his services

in treating the sick who came to the hospital. This was not objected to at first, but he turned out to be such a mass of deceit and imposition that he could not be tolerated. He had all the absurd notions of attributing diseases to either wind, breath, water or sweat, and consulted the patient himself, under which of these agents his disease was to be classified. He treated disease by acupuncture, and counter irritation, the former was accomplished by formidable needles, which were applied to all parts of the body, regardless of injuring blood-vessels or other important organs, and the latter employed in the cure of head-ache or sore-throat, by pinching up the skin between the finger and thumb repeatedly till the skin is quite red. As a matter of course the native doctors saw danger to their trade by the practice of European Medicine and Surgery, and dissuaded patients from attending the hospital.

On enquiry, Dr. Lamprey ascertained that Chinese doctors have no preparatory education to fit them for their profession; they are consequently ignorant of all those branches of science, to the study of which so many years must be given in our colleges. They require no special qualification to practice; any man may call himself a Doctor, and profess to cure diseases. Mostly all broken down scholars—men who have failed at the public examinations—generally adopt this kind of life. There is a college of Physicians in Peking, which was originally intended to educate and qualify men for the proper practice of the healing art; but as an institution, it only exists in name.

While these self-constituted "doctors," are nothing but the veriest quacks, the vendors of medicine, or apothecaries are a more respectable class of people. They have well arranged shops, so neatly and elegantly fitted up they would

do credit to any European city. Dr. Lamprey observed them compounding prescriptions in these establishments with much admiration. A person—sometimes a mere child—would come in with a piece of paper, having the prescription written on it, and hand it to the dispenser. All Chinese medicines are dry preparations of medicinal plants, roots, seeds, or leaves; so that there are no liquid medicines sold at these shops. After carefully weighing each item and folding it up in a piece of paper, with the name and quantity written upon it, and folding all together in one large piece, the compounder then counted up the cost of the whole on his counting board, receiving payment and returning the prescription. The expertness in doing this was admirable; there was no making up of mixtures, tinctures, infusions, or decoctions, which is done in the patient's home, and the virtues extracted by boiling water, just as they infuse their tea.

In his intercourse with the natives the British soldier displayed all his John Bull contempt for the Chinese language, which brought out many comical phases in the garrison life at Tien-tsin. It is true that they picked up a few native words which they interspersed with English, but these would be introduced with a running commentary on the Chinese text. Thus, soldier *loquitur*:—

"I say, my man, there's no use, you see, in your talking to me, because I don't understand your language, but just you listen to what I have got to say to you. If you don't bring lots of 'sooay'—that is, plenty of water—'ming tien,' that's to-morrow morning at six o'clock, I'll just knock saucepans out of you, that's all. Now 'wilo,' *i.e.*, 'go away!'"

The most amusing application of a word was "sabey,"

which was used by the soldiers as if it were a Chinese term, and by John Chinaman as English, whereas it is a corruption of the Portuguese verb *saber*, "to know." The chaplain had an Irish soldier and two Canton coolies, who attended to his wants, or as frequently neglected their duties. They were, however, on good terms with each other, and ate their meals together. One day he heard Paddy speaking to them in the following manner:—

"Do you call thim petaytees?" (contemptuously). "You never was in a country called Oirland, you sabey, becace if I had you there, I'd show you what petaytees is, you sabey. Sure, the people has to live on petaytees in Oirland—that's where I come from, this piecey man, you sabey—but surely no one could live on the likes of them, you sabey. It's all very well for you now, you sabey, becace you get mate every day for your dinner, you sabey; that's becace we are at war now, you sabey, with the Emperor of China, this piecey country, you sabey, and the innimy has to feed you, you sabey; but if you were at pace, and living quiet and asy at home, in your little bit of a cabin in Oirland, you sabey, do you think you'd get mate every day for your dinner? Oh! never a bit, you sabey!"

When the Peiho River was fairly frozen over, it became the great highway for native traffic, changing the whole aspect of the scene at Tien-tsin. As that name signifies the "heavenly ferry," from a bridge of boats that crosses the river, this was no longer necessary, and those who wished to cross could do so on foot. The Chinese used small sledges, capable of carrying two people seated, and propelled by a third person behind. These were in great requisition by the soldiers, who hired them, and worked as hard at pushing them along as if they had been paid for it. Many a tumble

they got, but persevered at the exercise as if it was a pleasure. Then the officers managed to get skates made after a pattern one of them had brought from England; so they selected a smooth part of the river several miles below the city to skate upon.

Farther down a British gunboat was frozen in, and her deck housed for the winter. If anything, the sailors were better off for provisions than the soldiers; the deck was one long larder; whole sheep, a side of beef, strings of pheasants, grouse, wild ducks, hares, and a deer or two, were always to be seen. Thus the allied garrison passed the winter on the rigorous shores of Northern China without the slightest molestation from the Chinese army; and an amicable feeling arose between them and the inhabitants that impressed them favourably, but which, alas! did not avert the Tien-tsin massacre, which happened ten years afterwards.





CHAPTER XIII.

Return to Peking in the Spring.—Visit to the Mandarin.—Interview in his library. Explanation of the family friendliness, that he and his daughter are Christian converts.—Joyful meeting with Loo A-Lee.—They are members of the Russian Church.—Custom of courting and betrothal in China.

WHEN spring came round, the wintry aspects of Tien-tsin and the garrison disappeared more rapidly than they came. The ice broke up, and presented a fine sight as it went crashing down the rapid river. The snow disappeared from the wide plain under the rays of the sun, which soon became uncomfortably hot in the middle of the day, so as to induce dangerous illnesses among the troops. Nevertheless, the change in the season was right welcome to all, as it opened up navigation, and they were again in communion with the outer world.

Among the first arrivals were the ministers of Great Britain and France, appointed to establish in person their respective legations at Peking, which had been only temporarily formed after the conclusion of hostilities in the autumn of the previous year. During the winter those in charge had selected suitable residences for the embassies. The building chosen for Mr. Bruce (brother to Lord Elgin) was the palace of the Duke of Leang, originally an imperial residence, and rented to the British Government, in perpetuity, at five hundred pounds a year, no rent to be paid for

the first two years, owing to the extensive alterations and repairs it required.

As it came within the duties of the Royal Engineers for some of them to superintend these alterations, Captain Gordon was applied to for several of his most skilled sappers. I was only too glad to volunteer my services, as



MANDARIN IN HIS BUREAU.

it afforded the long-wished-for opportunity of visiting the mandarin and his daughter at Peking. I took my departure from Tien-tsin with several comrades, along with the secretaries and *attachés* of the legations, under an escort of mounted troopers and Sikh cavalry, who preceded the ministers as far as Tung-chow.

It may be supposed that I often thought of Loo A-Lee

during the long and dreary winter at Tien-tsin. Not only was this the case, but I wondered why I had been so kindly received by her father and kindred. I had not seen any of my newly-made Chinese friends since the night of the family feast, on account of my receiving orders next day to proceed with the advanced guard to Tien-tsin. The more I pondered over the friendly, nay, almost brotherly reception given to me on that occasion, the more I was puzzled to find out the cause of so much kindness. It is true I had rendered some service to the family in protecting one of its most beloved members under circumstances of danger and distress. But this alone could scarcely account for the manner in which I had been welcomed by the mandarin and his household. I knew that the Chinese, especially among the official classes, were most exclusive in admitting visitors to the female apartments, even among their own countrymen, far less any foreign barbarian? Perhaps it may have been, from a fear of further dangers overwhelming the city itself, that my protection might be obtained in saving his house from plunder, that the mandarin showed me so much consideration. If so, now that there are no grounds for such fears, I may possibly be denied admittance to the house and the object of my affections.

After so long an absence, I knocked at the gate of the mandarin's house with some trepidation. The keeper promptly opened it, and in answer to the question if his master or mistress were in, he replied in the affirmative, and shortly returned with the mandarin, who received me in the same kindly manner as formerly, and invited me into his bureau, or library, where he conducted his official duties.

This apartment did not differ from others in the style of

architecture, but it was differently furnished. Ranges of shelves lined the walls, relieved at intervals by elaborately carved bookcases of sandalwood, sapanwood, and ebony. These were filled with books upon all subjects, ancient and modern, necessary for the *literati* to study in passing through the competitive examinations, which require the student to be specially learned in the classic books of Kong-foo-tsze, whose name the Jesuits Latinized into Confucius. Like other anomalies among the Chinese as compared with Europeans, a library and its contents differ in their arrangement from ours. We print on both sides of the leaf, they only on one; we page our books at the top, they on the margin; we place our notes on the text at the bottom of the page, they at the top; we read the sentences horizontally from left to right, they perpendicularly from right to left; we mark the title of a book on the back of the binding, they on the margin of the leaf; and in our libraries we set our volumes upon edge, while they pile them on the side.

After the complimentary salutations were over, the Mandarin, or, as I shall in future name him, Meng-kee, proceeded to inquire how I and my brethren in arms had passed the winter at Tien-tsin. Many other questions were asked by him, concerning the new relations between the Allies and the Chinese Government, which raised my suspicions that I was being made a tool of by an astute official to elicit secret information regarding the movements of the British forces. Among other matters he inquired particularly if any intelligence had reached us, after the opening of navigation, as to the movements of the Taipings. On this head I had no reason for withholding information, and had gleaned a good deal from the Shanghai and Hong Kong newspapers brought up by the mails.

During this conversation, the mandarin assumed so serious and anxious an expression of countenance, different from his usual equanimity, that I resolved to question him on my part, to ascertain, if possible, the reasons for his inquisitiveness, and if it was his intention to make use of my information against our armies.

"Be not afraid, honourable sir," Meng-kee replied; "I am greatly interested in what you say, but not a word of it shall be used to injure you or your ever-victorious army. I am more a friend," he added, in a subdued tone of voice, "than I dare almost to tell you."

Now, I thought, I shall get at the mystery of all that has puzzled me in my intercourse with the mandarin and his daughter, and so I replied: "Honourable sir, I accept the sincerity of your words, that you do not intend to do me any harm; but I am impressed with the belief that there is more than what is apparent in your manner and that of your daughter towards me, who am a stranger and a foreigner fighting against your government, that you should show me so much attention and kindness."

"In saying these words, valiant sir, you have penetrated into the secrets of our hearts, and it is only proper that I should explain." Upon this Meng-kee rose from his seat, and walked across the room to one of the book-cases, which he unlocked, and out of its most secret recess brought forth a goodly volume. Then he laid it on the table reverently before me, saying:

"There, Christian sir, as you can read the characters of our language, you will see that I cherish the doctrines of your sublime faith, and my daughter also, as set forth in that book, and that is why we honour you and sympathize with your country." On looking into the volume, I saw

地
主
上
帝
皇
天
前
天
天
前

九十 一百 一百二十 一百五十

三十四十五十六十七十八

十
十一
十二
十三
十四
十五
二十

一 二 三 四 五 六 七 八 九

仙傳八
入
遺記
農泉
圭
貞
赤
白
美



that it was a translation of numerous selected chapters from the Bible, with comments by the missionaries, explanatory of passages not readily to be understood by the Chinese.

"Come," said Meng-kee, "let us proceed to the apartments of my daughter, and let her know that I have divulged the secret of our conversion to the Christian faith."

It was a joyful meeting, and we three conversed freely upon religious subjects, and the prospect of the spread of Christianity in China. This brought on the subject of Taiping propagandism, and Meng-kee produced several decrees of the leader of the movement, setting forth their tenets. "What is the general opinion," he asked, "among your countrymen as to the doctrines they profess?"

Having read a good deal on the subject, not only in the English newspapers, but in the local press of China, I told him that opinions were divided; some espousing the cause of the Taipings, as the means of regenerating the country and bringing it within the pale of Christian dominion. Not only did they countenance the cause in publications, but they assisted in sending the insurgents arms and ammunition to carry on the insurrection against the Imperial forces.

This statement excited the mandarin very much, and caused him to ask rather abruptly, "Do the honourable commanders of your forces agree to this?"

"No! not exactly in aiding them to fight, although some sympathize in the cause. But should the Taipings attack any of the towns near our settlements, such as Shanghai, they have been warned that the troops will drive them away with shot and shell."

"Ah! we will not say any more on this subject just now,

but we will the next time you come ; and honourable sir, say nothing of this to others."

I assured him that he had nothing to fear, and after bidding A-Lee an affectionate adieu, I returned once more to my quarters.

The discovery that A-Lee and her father were Christian converts caused me to inquire of the interpreters at the embassy where and what missions were in Peking. They said that there were no Protestant missions established in the city, but steps were being taken to do so, according to an article in the treaty. There were, however, four Roman Catholic establishments, distributed in the north, south, east, and west quarters of the Tartar city. These missions were conducted by two abbés, eight foreign, and nine Chinese priests, under the supervision of a French bishop. They said that there were no less than five thousand hereditary Christians in Peking, who could trace back their conversion to the time when the Jesuits held high office under Government, more than one hundred and fifty years before. Few proselytes had of late been made, but since the treaty indications of greater success were becoming more apparent. No women were allowed to attend the churches, the missionaries being compelled thus far to yield to national custom and prejudice. Six meeting-houses, however, had been established in different parts of the city, where the female Christians assembled, and had service read to them by priests detailed for the purpose.

Learning one day that the physician attached to the Legation, was going to visit the principal French Missions, I requested and was kindly permitted to accompany him. The first we visited was in the north quarter of the town, the ground on which it stood, having formerly belonged to the

French, was restored to them by the Convention of Peking. During the short time that had elapsed, every exertion had been made to convert the ordinary Chinese buildings found on the grounds into an ecclesiastical establishment, all that remained of the former buildings being the steps of the cathedral.

Our visit was a very interesting one, and we were politely received by the Abbés Smorinburgh and Thierry, both of whom had adopted the Chinese garb, shaved the lower part of the head, and wore long cues. The former was a Dutch ecclesiastic, a man of great energy and apparently practical ability. In addition to superintending the establishment generally, he was then actively employed furnishing materials for its decorations. The foreign priests also wore the Chinese costume, and were not easily distinguishable from the native priests, whose appearance was pleasing and their manners polite. Besides these ecclesiastics there were forty Chinese youths, who were being educated there, including fifteen student priests. They lived in the mission, and the arrangements for the pupils seemed both judicious and comfortable in character. It being Good Friday, they were at the time performing service in the chapel, and presented a curious appearance dressed in their white robes chanting the *Chemin de la Croix*. We could not help remarking the similarity between the genuflexions of the Catholic priests and those performed by the Buddhist priests in their temples.

Shortly after this visit to the French Missions I called upon Meng-Kee, describing what I had seen, asking him if that was the church of which he and his daughter were members.

"Oh no!" he replied, "we belong to the Greek Church

established by the Russians in Peking two hundred years ago."

"During all that time the Archimandrites and other members of the mission have always been upon amicable terms with the authorities, who have tolerated our form of religion, while there has been a bad feeling existing towards the Roman Catholic bishops and priests; and it is even now with the greatest reluctance that the Government have consented to restore the grounds formerly belonging to the Jesuits."

"Can you account for this difference in tolerating one sect and not the other of the same religion?"

"That I can. Simply because the Roman Catholic missionaries have interfered with the rights of the state, while the ecclesiastics of the Greek Church have confined their operations entirely to the propagation of the Christian faith. The former have always endeavoured to screen their converts from justice when they have broken Chinese laws, for the purpose of making proselytes, no matter if they be criminals or political offenders; whereas the latter have never done so, but freely delivered up any delinquent converts who thought they were shielded from punishment while under the protection of the missionaries. You will see then, honourable sir, that the Jesuits have themselves to blame for the persecutions they have undergone."

"I have heard this before," I said, "and agree with you that they have not only brought evil upon their sect by such conduct, but also upon all the other Christian Missions in China. I belong neither to the Greek Church or the Roman Catholic Church, but to the Protestant Church whose missionaries have not yet established themselves at

Peking, but possess numerous missions in the southern and middle parts of the empire."

"I am not ignorant of the tenets of your honourable church, for indeed they assimilate more with those of our creed than those of the Roman Catholic Church. For instance like you we do not recognise the supremacy of the Pope, and the privilege of matrimony is extended to the priesthood. The Russian Mission at present in Peking consists of four ecclesiastical and six lay members, who are all married, some of them to Chinese converts."

I was surprised to find Meng-kee well acquainted with the differences between the Christian sects whose missionaries were endeavouring to propagate the gospel in China; and equally surprised to learn that the Government were so tolerant towards the Russian missionaries. Moreover, I had been under the impression that no mandarin could hold office while professing any foreign religion, and I consequently questioned Meng-kee on that point.

"You are so far correct," he said, "as to professors of the Roman Catholic faith not being found among the official class, for I know of none. In Peking almost all the converts of that mission are tradespeople, especially watch-makers and their families, whose ancestors were taught the business by the Jesuits. On the other hand, those among the mandarins who are Christians belong to the Greek Church. Hence I, and most of my kindred you met the other night, who are officials and members of the Greek Church, are never brought to task by our superiors, excepting they suspect"—here the mandarin spoke in a whisper—"that any of us sympathize with the Taipings."

On saying this his features assumed the anxious expression which I had observed before when he made

inquiries as to their movements in the south. "You seem to have a feeling of uneasiness in mentioning these rebels," I said to him.

"Well, I did not think you would observe it, but since you have said so, I will candidly tell you in confidence, honourable sir, that I am suspected, and consequently have fallen under the displeasure of my superiors. The fact is, I who, from my long services, am entitled to one of the highest posts on the Board of Rites, have been for years kept in a subordinate position, while younger men, less experienced, have been promoted over my head, because they are pure Confucianists, upholding no other doctrines than those promulgated by the great sage."

Here was a fresh piece of secret information divulged, giving me a further insight into the mandarin's character and position. It was evident that he was a disappointed man in his expectations of promotion, and it was such persons who joined the insurrectionary cause against the corrupt Tartar government. Evidently he was a man of strong convictions, and felt keenly the slight put upon him because he was a Christian. While these thoughts flashed through my mind, A-Lee came in, having just returned from a visit to some of her friends.

"Welcome again, my noble defender," she said, clasping my hand; "I have lost the pleasure of your visit by being absent, but I had to go and see the presents a young friend of mine has received on the eve of her marriage."

"Is she to be married after the Chinese manner?" I asked; "if so, I should like to witness it."

"Yes," replied Loo A-Lee; "and you may come with my father to see the ceremony."

"That you may," said Meng-kee; "and though we

do not follow them in the nuptial rites of our Christian communion, yet I am not so prejudiced as to refuse attending the marriage of any of my friends whose parents differ from me on these points."

"I shall be glad to go with you," I answered, "and have the forms of the ceremony explained. In the meantime, tell me what are the preliminary arrangements, and how the young couple are betrothed."

"The preliminaries of betrothal and marriage," replied Meng-kee, "are more complicated than those practised in your country, or by us Chinese Christians. Instead of the young people meeting each other and proposing, the business is conducted by the parents and by professional matchmakers. When the father or elder brother has resolved upon a young man of the family being married, they send for a *mei-jin*, or go-between. This person is instructed to proceed to the house where the lady resides to whom they wish this relative to be married. He states his errand, and if her father is willing that the match should take place, he inquires the maiden name of the young lady, and the day and hour of her birth, which are all duly registered. These are submitted to a diviner, who compares the eight characters which compose the name and date of birth with those of the young man, and thus ascertains whether the marriage will be a happy one or not. When these things are settled favourably, the other preliminaries of the marriage are proceeded with. The second step consists of the go-between being sent back to the house of the lady to announce that the alliance will be a felicitous one, and request a promise of marriage. This form is called 'delivering the happy tidings.' The third step is the procuring of a written promise of marriage from the young

woman's parents. This being obtained, the bridegroom sends pieces of silk, gold, silver, wine, or fruit, according to his circumstances, to the friends of his espoused wife. The fifth step is a message to request that her parents will fix a day for the marriage; and finally, when the time has arrived, the bridegroom goes in person to fetch his bride home to his father's house, where the marriage ceremony is performed."

"And does he not see his intended wife before the wedding-day?"

"No," replied Meng-kee; "or it is considered he has not."

"Ah, but, father," said A-Lee, "they manage somehow to do so, by bribing the go-betweens."

"Well," said I, "I should not like to take my chance in that way. I should like to see and converse with my future wife before the bonds of matrimony were tied."





CHAPTER XIV.

A Chinese Wedding.—The young wife dwells with her mother-in-law.—Marriage trousseau and presents.—Noisy arrival of the Marriage Procession.—The Bride comes home to the Bridegroom.—Wedding ceremony performed.—Rough manner of treating the Bridegroom by his friends.—The Bride criticised by her lady friends.—A Supper ends the Marriage.

SEVERAL days after this interview with the mandarin and his daughter, I proceeded to meet them according to appointment. When we reached the house we found them ready to start in their sedan-chairs. The chair-bearers were dressed in the livery of their master, and as it would be dark on their return, each carried a lantern with the mandarin's name and titles inscribed on its paper covering. When they arrived at their destination the gentlemen were ushered into the apartment set aside for the male visitors, and A-Lee went into the one for the ladies. After being introduced to the chief persons of the company, I inquired in whose house we were.

Meng-kee replied, "This is the residence of the bridegroom's father and family, and where we await the coming home of his bride, who will afterwards live with him in the house."

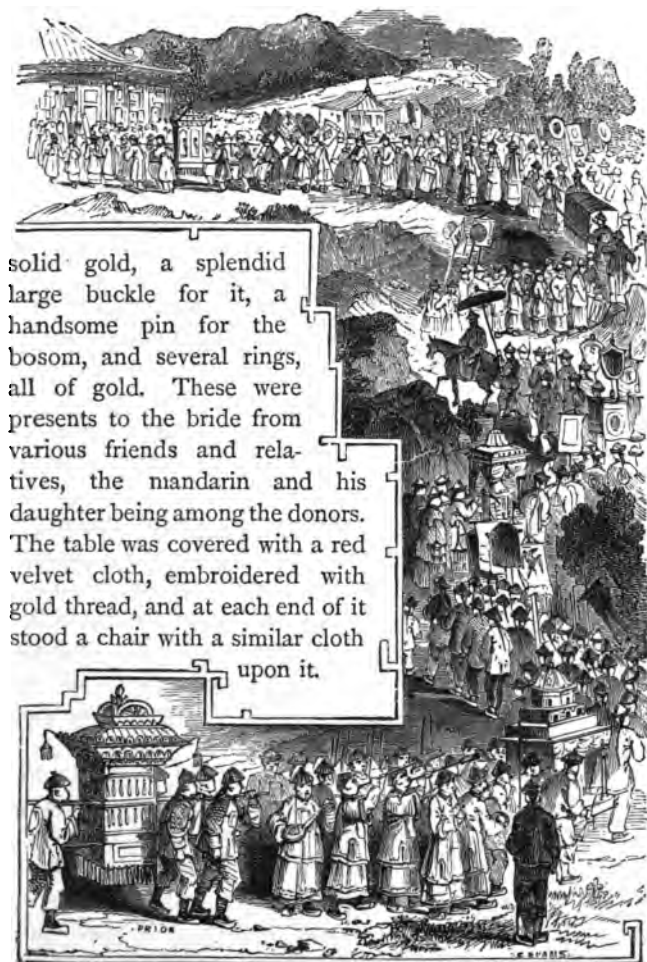
"Why, that is the reverse of our marriage custom, for the

bridegroom proceeds to his father-in-law's house and takes away his bride to an independent home of his own."

"There are instances of that kind among us, where the bridegroom is a Government official, but these are rare. In other cases, such as the one before us, the young wives are always brought to their father-in-law's house, for it is considered a breach of filial duty for the son to set up a household of his own while the father lives. In this house there are four married sons, and this marriage will make a fifth, so that there are a good number of wives in the establishment, including the father's secondary wives. But the first wife is mistress over all. These young wives are not only subordinate to her, but they are taught that their most binding duty is to obey and serve her."

"Well," I thought, "these are privileges for old ladies with a vengeance! Wouldn't our British mothers-in-law glory in having such power by Act of Parliament?"

Meng-kee now pointed to a doorway with a screen before it, and asked me to follow him into the hall. On entering we perceived a narrow table on the right hand of the door, covered with sweetmeats and fruit, having two small wax candles burning at each end. At the side of the hall opposite to this was the picture of a deified hero, with the ancestral tablet below, resting on the family altar, before which incense sticks were burning and filling the hall with a pleasant perfume. By the sides of the altar stood two wax candles about three feet high and three inches in diameter. On a table standing before the family altar were placed at one end more than twenty female garments and a pair of small embroidered shoes. At the other end were packets of red paper, containing pieces of gold and silver coins, and in the middle was a tray, with a cincture for the waist, made of



Further inspection was interrupted by a bustle outside the hall and the entrance of all the relatives and friends come to witness the ceremony. Soon afterwards the word "coming" was spoken by some one, whereupon a young friend of the bridegroom, chosen as "the receiver of guests," put on a long light-coloured silk garment over his usual dress. The exclamation "Coming!" was twice repeated, upon which he put on two other garments, one of figured light-green silk, and the other a dark purple robe of figured satin, having in his hand a pyramidal cap, with red silk at the apex. The father now asked if all was ready; he was answered in the affirmative. Then his son entered the hall, and "the receiver of guests" conducted him to his seat at the head of the table.

The sound of music was now heard outside, together with the banging of gongs, and the noise culminated in a shower of fire-crackers that fairly deafened our ears.

When these noises ceased, the procession entered the court-yard. It consisted of persons holding scarlet canopies over the heads of relatives of the bride, and others carrying chests, carved and painted in red, edged with gold, containing the bride's wardrobe. In the midst of the procession came her chair, a very gorgeous sedan, hired for such occasions, elaborately carved and gilded, with the red satin curtains drawn so that no one could see her. When the four chair-bearers arrived at the outer gate, they set down the chair, and opened it to let her out. She was dressed in a scarlet robe of satin, richly embroidered, and wore a thick scarlet veil of silk crape, so that literally she could not see, or her features be seen. Her head-dress was an elaborate toilet of blue and gold flowers. Two old women stood at the door of the chair and took her out, while she

remained perfectly passive in their hands. They then carried her into the hall, where they set her down before the altar and tablet of her future husband's ancestors.

Meanwhile the bridegroom had left the hall, but in a few minutes returned with his young male friends and the Buddhist priest appointed to perform the rites of marriage. These friends almost carried him in bodily, and set him down beside his bride before the ancestral tablet, each clasping their hands, and reverentially bowing their heads. Then the priest began to intone the service, in the midst of which, at a given signal, the two old women joined hands and knelt before the tablet. Then they tied a piece of red silk ribbon to the girdle of the bridegroom, and a piece of green silk ribbon to that of the bride. The priest muttered again, and they all joined in ; after which the two women tied the ribbons together, and thus they were united for life in the bonds of matrimony.

This done, they all rose from their prostrate position, and the united couple were seated together before the table where the collation was spread. Here the two old women poured out two cupfuls of wine, which they held to the lips of both ; they then changed the cups, poured the wine out of one cup into the other, thus mixing the wine together, and again presented them to their lips. In like manner two dishes of rice were intermingled, and partaken of by the bride and bridegroom. Having thus seen them go through the ceremony of eating together, the old women retired, but immediately returned with a pail and a broom, which they placed at the side of the wife, to indicate her household duties ; while the priest pronounced a benediction on the married couple.

These forms concluded the ceremony. The bride was

then carried out into her own apartment by the two old women, and the bridegroom was conveyed bodily, head foremost, into his apartment by his young men. He underwent some chaffing for a little, and then went alone to his bride, where he drew off the veil, and for the first time beheld her face.

"What think you of the ceremony?" asked Meng-kee.

"Well, I have been very much interested in witnessing it. Though I am not expected to understand the nature of the forms gone through, yet it is sufficiently obvious that they are full of meaning—the last one especially, where the two ribbons are tied as an emblem of their being united. I must say also that, with the exception of the bridegroom being carried out so unceremoniously by his friends, the whole ceremony has been conducted with decorum, and some degree of solemnity."

"Yes, you are right; it is a rude, but an old custom, and therefore it is tolerated. But that is mild to what I have seen at some marriages, where the bridegroom is brought into the hall on the shoulders of his friends, who set up a great shouting and laughter, and tumble him down beside his bride, struggling like a prisoner to get free. But here our young host comes to entertain us for the evening."

By this time darkness had set in, and the hall was beautifully lighted up with lanterns of the most variegated forms and colours, giving quite a brilliant aspect to the scene. Then the relatives and guests seated themselves at the tables, while servants flitted in and out with savoury dishes, of which they partook heartily, each one chatting to his neighbour and discussing the ceremony of the day.

I was introduced by Meng-kee to the bridegroom, who was a young man of about four-and-twenty, having a

remarkably intelligent countenance. He thanked me for the honour of my presence in very polite terms. Then he rose, carrying in his hand a beautiful porcelain jar filled with sweet rose-coloured wine, and walking round the tables, poured some into each guest's cup. The master of the ceremonies, or "receiver of guests," now intimated that the bridegroom wished to express his obligations to his friends who had honoured him with their presence on the occasion.

The bridegroom then invited me into the ladies' apartment, where a large assemblage of the bride and bridegroom's female friends were partaking of supper, among whom was A-Lee, who looked the belle of the party. The newly-made wife sat at the top of the table, and rose on their entrance, rubbing her breast up and down with her right hand to express her delight on the occasion. One of her attendants then called out—"Worthy matrons and young ladies, the bride desires to offer her respectful thanks to you all for your kindness and attention."

We then returned to the gentlemen's supper-room, followed by the bride and her attendants, where one of them acknowledged the honour they had conferred upon her by their presence at the wedding. After this she retired to the bridal chamber. Here, I thought, she would now be screened from the gaze of her visitors. Not so. On the contrary, it was only now, apparently, that they were to have a good look at her to make up for her past and future seclusion. To any special visitor who entered, the bride was brought out for inspection, and at the interview he or she was allowed to offer any remarks they chose about her lips, nose, eyes, brows, feet, or any part of her dress. The composure of the young bride through it all was amazing—

not a smile on her lips, not a blush on her face ; the muscles seemed immovable. This demeanour, I was told, added to the reputation of the bride for her gravity, calmness, and temper in not being fluttered by the remarks, good or bad, from favourable or unfavourable criticism.





CHAPTER XV.

I am engaged to marry the Mandarin's Daughter.—Foong Cut-Sing, a Taiping emissary.—The Mandarin confesses that he is secretly enrolled as a Taiping.—I have an interview with them about the Rebellion.—Rebels profess a quasi-Christianity.—Origin of the movement.—Its desolating progress through the country.—Meng-kee expresses disgust at the corruption of the Tartar government.

TIME passed on and I became more and more intimate with the mandarin, his daughter, their kindred, and friends. A-Lee's lady connections quizzed her unmercifully for having a "barbarian" lover, for it was by this time understood by all that my visits were something more than ordinary friendly calls.

"We are both Christians," she would say to them, "and it does not matter what country we belong to, if we are sincere in professing that faith, and become united in the holy ties of wedlock, under the blessings of a religion which makes that union equal between husband and wife in the eyes of God and man. I have imbibed the doctrines preached by the missionaries of our church, and learned from their teaching the superior condition of females in Christian countries compared to what it is here. When I consider their physical and mental degradation, I dread the

thralldom I would have to submit to in espousing a husband among my own countrymen."

On my part I was equally earnest in my devotion to Loo A-Lee ; and when joked about it by my comrades or the officials at the legation, I was not ashamed to own my honorable intentions of marrying her. "She is not a heathen," I would argue, "but a true Christian, and willing to become a member of our Protestant church, which differs very little from the one in which she has been brought up. I know that her affection for me is pure, and true love recognizes no nationality, where both are sincere. As to her appearance and manner, she is a perfect lady and a beauty whom I should be proud of introducing to her sisters in England. I am only waiting for the time, which I hope will not be long, when my service in the corps expires, to make her my wife and settle down to some occupation in China."

Not only did we speak openly to our friends of our engagement to be married, but it was a constant theme when we met and conversed about our future prospects. In this happy manner we passed the summer time away, and we beheld not an obstacle in our way to an early union. Alas ! We were destined to encounter many trials before we reached that consummation of our blissful dreams.

Upon several occasions I met a stranger at the mandarin's, who gave his surname as Foong and his proper name as Cut-sing. He was about thirty years of age, of the middle height, and had a thick-set figure. His forehead was low, with strongly-marked eyebrows, overhanging acute-angled eyelids that shaded restless, piercing eyes. In manner he was officiously polite, but a sneer which frequently crossed his feature, while making his humble obeisance, indicated

insincerity of disposition. He was a native of South China, and, though a scholar, he spoke the mandarin dialect of Peking with a peculiar provincial accent. There was something about the man that was displeasing, yet he was most assiduous in his attentions to secure my good opinions.

It was always in the evening when Cut-sing made his appearance at Meng-kee's house, and generally he and his host would retire into the library, holding secret converse together. Apparently he was not a favorite with any one, except the mandarin himself, who paid him great attention.

From what I saw, however, I concluded that those were matters of importance discussed between them, which they were unwilling to speak of before the members of the household or their friends.

One evening when this stranger called, I was asked to join them in the library, which I assented to, as I felt somewhat curious to know the topic of their conversation. On this head I was soon enlightened by Meng-kee, who said, after they had been seated—

“My friend, Foong Cut-sing, is anxious to know if your honorable officials at the Embassy have heard any late news of the Taiping movements at Nanking and the middle provinces.”

“Yes, noble sir,” the stranger added, “you will make me your humble debtor, if you can tell me. I trust that I do not infringe on your honour by asking you to give me any information on the subject.”

“Not at all,” I replied. “It is no breach of confidence to tell you what I hear, for the news is published in our newspapers at Shanghai, so that any one who reads English knows all about it.”

"Ah!" said Cut-sing, "I wish I could speak and read your honourable language, as you do ours."

"The latest news received by steamer, informs us that the Taiping army under Chung Wang have captured Soo-chow and Hang-chow, and numerous smaller walled cities in Kiang-soo and Che-kiang, which have been garrisoned by forces said to be two hundred thousand strong."

On hearing this the stranger's eyes twinkled, and he remarked in a suppressed tone of voice, "This is great news indeed. These two cities are the most famous in our great flowery land for their wealth and luxury. The poet has said that 'Paradise is in heaven above, but Soo-chow and Hang-chow are on the earth below.' What successes these are! The conquering armies of the Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace will prevail over the imps."

"I don't know exactly what you mean," was my rejoinder, "but I tell you that the British and French authorities at Shanghai are becoming afraid for the safety of that settlement. Admiral Hope has been to Nanking, and held a parley with the rebel chiefs, saying that the British forces will not interfere with the progress of the rebellion, if the Taiping hordes approach no nearer than ninety *lee* (thirty miles) of that treaty port. Should they cross the boundary, our troops will fire upon them."

This piece of information seemed to displease Cut-sing, and he quickly interrupted, saying, "Pardon, noble sir, they would not dare to injure one of your people. For are they not both God-worshippers, and believers in the elder brother Jesus Christ? Is not theirs a form of religion most effectual for propagating the truth of Christianity? Before their progress all forms of idolatry are totally destroyed, without distinction, and the ruins of Pagan Temples

and the remains of Buddhist idols are to be seen far and near wherever their victorious arms have been."

"Ho ! ho !" I thought, "our inquisitive stranger is a rebel ;" so I remarked at once, "From what you say, I conclude you are a Taiping?"

"I am," he replied unhesitatingly, "and I glory in being a humble subject of the Taiping Tien-wang. I came last from Nanking to this city of the Tartar imps, where if I was suspected I would be cut to pieces by them. But you, honourable sir, will not, I am sure, inform upon me."

"Certainly not," I said, "you may rely on the honour of a British soldier. Besides, I am not a friend of this treacherous Tartar Government, who tortured and murdered our men ; and if your Taiping Government succeed in overthrowing them, without hurting us, why we should be glad, especially as you profess to be imbued with the spirit of Christianity."

"We not only profess the doctrines of your religion, but we practise it in the Protestant form which prevails in your honourable country. It is based upon the Holy Bible, which your learned missionaries have translated into our language, and distributed throughout the land. Our decalogue is literally the same as that of the English Church, but with annotations to some of the commandments applicable to the Taiping worshippers. The principal sacraments of the Protestant religion are observed ; the Holy Communion is rendered by an offertory of tea upon the altar every Sunday during service ; and no one can enter our ranks without being baptized with water. Our creed is the same apostolic creed as yours ; our prayers are the same, including the Lord's Prayer ; and our hymns are in praise of the heavenly God ; while our great festival is at Christmas."

"I have heard all this before, and that when your chief, Hoong Lew-tseuen, first disseminated his views, he and his followers were simple and sincere. But now, after the lapse of ten years, when his armies have overrun the country and defeated the imperialists, I have been told that, under his new title of Tien-wang, he assumes divine power himself, and his followers have degenerated into bands of banditti, who plunder and kill friend and foe alike, without establishing any peace in your distracted land."

"It is true, noble sir, that our armies have devastated the country in their progress from south to north, but that is the fate of all places where the scourge of war is introduced; as it has been where your own victorious army has defeated the Tartar forces and destroyed the palace of Heen Foong. But as your honourable chiefs have made peace with the imps through defeating them, so we expect to found our Great Peaceful Heavenly Kingdom on the ruins of the Tartar dynasty. Ah! if your armies and ours would but combine, we could destroy their power for ever, and raise up a dynasty of Christian emperors to last for all time."

"Well! the imps, as you call the imperialists, had a very narrow escape last year in a change of dynasty. If the allied forces had driven them out of Peking, and the Government had refused to come to terms, there is no saying but what they might have recognised your chief and placed him on the throne."

"It may not be too late yet, noble sir, to effect that union. Who can tell what the year may bring forth? We know through our agents that this is but a hollow peace the Tartars have made with you. There is no doubt there are some who are sincere in upholding it, but there are more among the war party, who look upon it as temporary, and

bide their time to renew the struggle, and drive your armies, if they can, into the sea."

"We know these things also, but our commanders are fully prepared for them, as they are on their guard at Shanghai to drive back your troops should they threaten to invade the suburbs of that city and settlement. I must tell you plainly," I added, "that some of them are in favour of maintaining the strictest neutrality, and allowing the insurrection to take its course, but the majority have as little reliance in their faith as in that of the Tartar Government. Besides, they find your chiefs to be ignorant men, excepting a few who have recently joined the movement."

"There you are rightly informed, and it is for the purpose of enlisting scholars in our righteous cause that I have been sent by the Chung-wang, the commander-in-chief of our armies, to Peking on a secret mission. Our honourable friend here, Meng-kee, is favourable to our cause, and I am empowered to offer him a high post should he join us."

"That is the case," said the mandarin, "and I am so disgusted with the corruption and favouritism of these Manchoos that I am seriously thinking of going over to the Taipings, who may in the end be the rulers of China. But let us return now to the ladies' apartments, to prevent them taking too much notice of our interview."





CHAPTER XVI.

Dangerous position of the Mandarin.—I suspect the Taiping emissary as a rival in my affections.—Loo A-Lee fears him.—Reports of the Emperor's illness at Je-hol.—Accounts of his death.—The Mandarin in tribulation at the event.—A sad parting from Loo A-Lee.—The people go into mourning for the deceased Emperor.—Relations with the British Embassy suspended.

WHEN I reflected on what the Taiping emissary had said, and the inducements he held out to enlist the mandarin in the cause, I became alarmed for the safety of the father of my beloved. I knew well, from what had transpired at Canton, of the sanguinary punishments inflicted on the rebels, even if only suspected, as proved by the wholesale decapitations by the monster Yeh. Nothing of the kind had occurred in Peking, as the Government had too much on hand with foreign affairs to look after these internal matters. This in a great measure accounted for the impunity with which Cut-sing had gone about his mission.

Of course I was careful not to whisper a word at the embassy about the secrets divulged by the emissary, but thought it advisable to ask Loo A-Lee if she was not afraid that his frequent visits would cause suspicion to fall upon her father, and he might come under the wrath of the Board of Punishments.

"I am indeed, and I have told my father that it is not safe to see Cut-sing come so often to the house. He agrees with me, and that man—of whom I have an involuntary dread has been told to make his visits less frequent, to prevent any of us getting into trouble."

This information was satisfactory in more ways than one, as I had a strong suspicion that the sinister-looking Taiping emissary cast an amorous eye on the mandarin's daughter, and that his frequent visits were on her account as much as that of the father. Be that as it may, I did not see Cut-sing at the house again, though I heard from Meng-kee that he saw him occasionally for a short time in the evening after it was dark, and that his mission was progressing favourably without creating any suspicion,

"The fact is, my honourable son, the present condition of the Government is so disjointed, that any important event may cause it to fall to pieces; and the ministers have been rendered powerless by the successes of your victorious army, and also by those of the Taipings. Moreover, the emperor is known to be seriously ill at his retreat of Je-hol in the fastnesses of the Tartar mountains; and the empress, whom we supposed to be in the secret apartments of the palace here, has been in close attendance on her lord in case he succumbs to his disease."

"This is important news, my honourable father, and would be of value to our embassy; so may I make use of the information, without compromising you in the matter?"

"You may do so, but be careful that my name is not mentioned as your informant."

At the embassy they had heard something about the emperor's illness, but as it was officially reported in the "Peking Gazette" that he was well, they were inclined

to disregard the rumours. But I heard that Mr. Bruce's Chinese secretary had an interview with Prince Kung that afternoon, who appeared in very low spirits. Wan Se-ang, the prime-minister, was also present, who wished to know from Mr. Wade if he had any recent news of the movements of the Taipings, and put the question point-blank, as to whether, in the event of their attacking the Takoo forts or Tien-tsin, we would defend those places. The secretary replied that the Taipings had no ships, and that there was no risk whatever of their coming near any place where the Allies were in military occupation. This functionary excused the dulness of the prince, as it was probably from some domestic cause, and there was nothing politically wrong. However, this explanation was not satisfactory to the members of the legation, and on further inquiry among their Chinese agents they learned that the information about the emperor's dangerous illness was correct.

Shortly afterwards a rumour was current that the emperor had died ten days before, and that it has been the policy of the Government on such occasions to keep the event secret until they deemed it proper to announce the fact publicly. There is one peculiar law put in force after such announcements, namely, that subjects of his deceased majesty are not allowed to marry for nine months. In view of his actual demise the matrimonial market at Peking was excessively busy concluding engagements that otherwise would not have been consummated until the following year. Great was the traffic among the match-makers, and the purveyors of wedding furnishings raised their prices in consequence of the demand for their wares and services. The number of marriage processions seen in the streets quadrupled from what I had seen in ordinary times. Some of these were on

a much grander scale than usual—camels were introduced into them, with the bridal chair, covered with gorgeous trappings, on the back, like the howdah on the elephant in India. Altogether the anxiety to get out of the state of single blessedness seemed to be the great characteristic of the day among the young Pekingese.

This uncertain state of affairs continued for more than a fortnight, and the people were "marrying and giving in marriage" until they ceased altogether. Then the official announcement of the emperor's death arrived from Jê-hol. At the same time a decree was published, proclaiming his eldest son, a boy between six and seven years of age, as his successor, with a council of eight ministers to assist him in carrying on the government—in fact, leaving him a mere puppet in the hands of the council, which consisted of those who had shown the greatest aversion to foreign intercourse, while all the best statesmen friendly to foreigners, including Prince Kung, were carefully excluded.

This event created great consternation among all classes of the Pekingese, and caused considerable anxiety to the members of the foreign legations. It was evident to every one that a serious crisis in the government of the empire was at hand; I therefore lost no time in calling upon the mandarin.

He was alone in his library, busy with his duties in connection with the State ceremonies to be arranged on the occasion of the Court going into mourning, and making preparations for the funeral of the deceased emperor. There was a careworn expression on his face, and this appearance was heightened by the change in his apparel, which was blue and white, without any ornamental work, according to the rules laid down in the Book of Rites, when the people mourn for a dead monarch.

"How will this event affect you?" I inquired, after salutations were over.

"Very seriously, my son," replied Meng-kee. "As you are aware, the members of this new council of State are inimical to foreigners, and should they hold supreme control over the various Boards, they will remove from office every one whom they suspect to be friendly to your countrymen here. Now I am not only suspected of this, but there are spies about our offices who would denounce me as a Taiping for the sake of obtaining promotion. Seeing that there is trouble in store for me, I must be very circumspect in my conduct, even towards you. To-morrow all relations between the Government and the embassies will be suspended for twenty days, during which there must be no intercourse between us. You will therefore, my son, have to postpone your visits for that period, so that I may not get into further trouble."

It was a sad parting with Loo A-Lee. Tears glistened in her eyes, and she sobbed at the thought of our future, though she almost recovered her composure before I left, and promised to write to me by a faithful messenger should anything important happen.

In the streets preparations were being made everywhere for the public mourning at the emperor's death, which was to continue for a hundred days. The shopkeepers were taking down all the red ornaments on their shop-fronts, and were hanging up strips of white and blue calico, or silk if the proprietors could afford it. All the richly-gilded sign-boards which hung outside the doors were also taken down, and a modest white sign substituted. Unusual activity prevailed, likewise, amongst the barbers, every person having his head shaved for the last time for three months, during

which the hair is allowed to grow, as a token of mourning for the monarch.

On reaching the embassy I saw the British standard hoisted half-mast high, and I learned that Mr. Bruce, the minister, had received a despatch from Prince Kung containing an official notification of his brother the emperor's death. The letter and envelope were in Chinese mourning, namely, white, the latter having a light pink stripe round it, and its contents, when translated, were to the following effect :—

"The prince with all solemnity informs the British minister that, on the 17th of the present month (22nd August), his majesty the emperor departed on the great journey, ascending on the dragon to be a guest on high ; and that nearly related as his royal highness is to the emperor, his grief is greater than words can express. Also, that occupied as he will be by the numerous and important obsequial rites, the performance of which he has to superintend, he will necessarily be compelled to postpone for twenty days the discussion of matters relating to foreign affairs, which otherwise it would be his duty to attend to."

Thus closed the mortal career of Hien Foong, Emperor of China, whose reign was one of turbulence and disaster, of internecine strife and foreign wars.





CHAPTER XVII.

A Conspiracy among the Councillors around the Emperor's death-bed.—Their plans defeated by the Empress and Prince Kung.—A new reign of "Law and Order."—The Taiping emissary induces the Mandarin to leave Peking and join the rebels.—He describes the Tien-Wang and his chiefs.—Loo A-Lee much troubled at the news, but resolves to accompany her father.

TROUBLOUS times of no ordinary character now set in, and the ancient, unwieldy empire of China was shaken to its very base. A political earthquake threatened to overwhelm the government, and to crush its best statesmen in the ruins. Both natives and foreigners were in a state of consternation, not knowing what evils a day might bring forth. The foreign ministers watched the course of events with intense interest, perceiving that all their treaties might be ignored, and the Allies involved in another war.

In this critical state of affairs there was one personage who saw through the machinations of the designing councillors of State, and who was determined to frustrate their schemes. That personage was a woman—the supreme wife of the late emperor. Although she was not the mother of the young heir to the throne, yet she stood up for his rights in the cause of law and order. During the last days of her deceased husband's illness she never left his bedside,

and while he was able to speak she listened to his behests regarding his successor and the future form of government. These were to maintain the Prince of Kung and his colleagues at the head of affairs, and to appoint the empress mother and empress dowager joint regents until his son came of age.

Meanwhile the crafty princes and statesmen who had followed their august master to Je-hol, formed a conspiracy, and drew up a decree appointing them as grand councillors, holding the reigns of government for the juvenile emperor. This document the empress denounced as a forgery, saying that what purported to be the signature of Hien Foong was the work of one of the conspirators after her husband was dead, he placing the vermilion pencil in the dead man's hand, and tracing the characters of his name while he held the fingers of the corpse.

These facts she made known secretly to the Prince Kung, requesting him to assist her in overthrowing the power of these conspirators. Accordingly, when the remains of the deceased monarch were being borne in state from Je-hol to Peking, accompanied by the young emperor, the empress dowager, and the self-elected councillors, they were met by an armed force headed by the prince, who made the whole of the conspirators prisoners, to be tried for treason against the State, and punished according to their degrees of crime. In the history of State revolutions, perhaps no *coup-d'état* was so speedily and so successfully carried out; from the time of its being put into execution and the offenders being brought to justice, only eight days elapsed. But what was the most strange part of the affair was the fact that in a country where women are treated as slaves to men, the one who accomplished the deed was a woman.

Not only did the empress succeed in overthrowing the powerful combination of princes and statesmen arrayed against her authority, but she succeeded in being made empress regent, having the chief post in the administration of the government, although there was no precedent in the history of the Manchoo dynasty for such an event. Under her presidency a council of regency was formed, who committed the conspirators to be tried by the Great Imperial Clan Court. Four of them were sentenced to death, and the others to be banished. These sentences were carried out as speedily as the capture of the prisoners had been accomplished, to the surprise of all foreigners. The regency was subsequently maintained with the same vigour, except when any of the statesmen belonging to the party inimical to foreigners were able to thwart the intentions of the empress dowager and her council in supporting the reign of *Toong Che*, signifying "Union in the Cause of Law and Order."

During the first days of these startling events the mandarin was busy far into the night, not only arranging papers in his library, but destroying others. He has since told me that though no one was admitted to his privacy during the day, yet the Taiping emissary obtained admittance secretly after the household had retired to rest. On these occasions the two would have long consultations, and sometimes a third and fourth person would be present, who were strangers to Meng-kee, introduced by Cut-sing as friends and agents of the Taiping cause.

"The time has now come, honourable sir," the emissary remarked, at one of these meetings, "when you can safely leave Peking and join our ranks at Nanking, where the Tien-wang, or his valiant lieutenant, Chung-wang, is sure to find you a high and lucrative post."

"How are the appointments made and classified?" was Meng-kee's inquiry.

"Besides the Heavenly King and his generalissimo, there are five principal ministers who never leave their duties at the boards of government in Nanking. The chiefs next in rank have no fixed residence, but are continually on the move with Chung-wang or some division of the army. It is from this rank that governors of cities are appointed, governors of provinces being elected from the most approved of them. Should you join us, I am empowered to state that you will at once be admitted into the rank that will make you eligible for one or other of these high posts."

This was very flattering to the mandarin, who acknowledged the proposed honour in suitable terms. The offer was tempting, and he saw no prospect of improving his position under the Manchoo government. On the contrary, hints were given in his office that he and those officials of his opinions, instead of obtaining promotion in the service, were likely to be degraded to a lower rank, until they showed proofs of their loyalty to the Tartar dynasty, and their abhorrence of the rebel usurpers of authority. Having revolved the matter well over in his mind before, he thought it best to decide at once to join the Taipings, who might yet succeed in overthrowing the Manchoo power, and become the legitimate rulers of the country. Being in this frame of mind, he addressed the emissary, saying :

"Relying upon the truth of all your statements, my honourable friend, I have resolved to join the ranks of the Tien-wang's followers, and trust that we may succeed in uprooting the rotten trunk of Manchoo corruption, and in its stead plant a healthy tree of liberty."

"Noble sir, your decision will be hailed with joy by all those whom we have enlisted in the cause, and who are now ready to start from Peking. We must be very cautious and secret in our movements; notwithstanding the commotion amongst the authorities at this crisis, there are spies abroad who would at the slightest suspicion pounce down upon us."

"I am fully aware of that, and have destroyed every document that might lead to detection. Moreover, in anticipation of leaving Peking, I have applied for leave of absence to attend upon my aged mother, who is sick at our family home on the banks of the Grand Canal. As you know, I am sure to obtain permission to leave on such a plea; therefore, I have appointed one of my most trustworthy relations to supply my place, while I take my departure with no one but my daughter."

This information delighted Cut-sing, so he said, "I shall then have the honour of accompanying you both on your journey."

"Not at starting," responded Meng-kee, "for it might raise suspicion. Let us arrange to meet at Tung-chow, where we can obtain boats for our voyage along the canal."

These preliminaries of the intended flight from Peking being so far settled, Meng-kee felt a degree of mental relief that night which he had not enjoyed for many a month before. Hitherto he was living in a state of constant dread that his sympathies with the Taipings might be discovered, and he might suffer the ignominious death by decapitation executed on all who fell into the hands of the Manchoos—a mode of death which is deemed the most abhorrent by the Chinese. Now there was a ray of hope before him that

he could mingle among a valiant host of his patriotic countrymen, who were pledged to restore the pure Chinese rule, broken off two centuries before by the fall of the Ming dynasty. Once at Nanking, he could speak and act freely according to his convictions, and thereby retain a serenity of mind he could not maintain at Peking.

In this strain he not only endeavoured to convince himself of the propriety of the step he was about to take, but he used the same arguments with his daughter to reconcile her as to its prudence.

"Dear father," she would say, "I own that your words are reassuring, and that we are about to fly from impending danger, but I am not so convinced as you are that we shall reach a haven of safety among the Taipings. I have not much faith in what Foong Cut-sing says to you about the grand offices in store for your choice, or in the harmony he says prevails among the followers of the Tien-wang. Cam-la says that his people who have mixed among them relate that a system of terror exists in the ranks, and jealousy among the chiefs, which is more to be dreaded than the corruption and anarchy among the government officials and troops here. But as you are resolved to go I shall not leave you, and will be ready on the morrow to take the journey."

"That is right, my beloved daughter; and, of course, when we reach my mother's house at Yang-chow, you shall remain there while I proceed to Nanking."

When the disconsolate A-Lee sat alone in her boudoir for the last time, she gave vent to her feelings in an unrestrained gush of tears. As she looked round her beautiful apartment, containing so many rare articles of *vertu* and elegant furniture, she grieved to think that it might be

despoiled by the ruthless emissaries of the Manchooks. She also grieved to think that she might never again meet her friends within its walls, where she had spent so many happy days. Among these friends one stood prominently before her mind's eye—the foreign soldier to whom she had plighted her troth. She had promised to write to him should any important matter happen to her or her father, but he had given injunctions that not a word should escape her as to the real motive for their departure. With these restrictions she indited the following epistle (Camela phonetic for Cameron):—

“Beloved Ca-me-la,—You will receive this letter after my father and I have left Peking to visit his aged mother, who is ill. It is the duty of the son to attend upon his parents in sickness, although he has other important duties to perform. His honourable superiors in office have granted the request, and we take our departure immediately. Hoping that we shall meet again before the buds are on the trees in spring, your image will remain engraven on the heart of your ever-loving Loo A-Lee.”

On the following day the mandarin and his daughter commenced their flight from Peking.

So startling and so rapid was the course of political events on the demise of the emperor, that the officials at the foreign legations were quite bewildered; and as the communications between them and the Foreign Office were suspended they had no means of ascertaining the real state of affairs upon trustworthy authority. However the Chinese runners belonging to the British Embassy managed to pick up the chief news of the day, until the twenty days of suspension had expired. These scraps of intelligence were so interesting that little else was thought of or discussed by

all within the precincts of Leang-Koong-fuh. I eagerly listened to the news, and looked forward anxiously to the day when I could revisit the mandarin and his daughter to discuss them.

On the nineteenth day from the time I had last seen them I received the letter of A-Lee. From its date it had been purposely held back three days, so that the fugitives had such a start as to preclude the possibility of my reaching them. Though not a hint was given in the note as to their destination, yet I concluded that Meng-kee had gone away to join the Taipings. What most concerned me was whether the emissary Cut-sing accompanied them or not, so I made up my mind to call next day and make inquiries of the gate-keeper. Presenting myself at the gate, I was glad to see the same old man in attendance, and gave him a *cumshaw* (present of money) on entering the vestibule. It relieved my mind considerably to find that the father and daughter had left in their chairs, with only chair-bearers and luggage-carriers. Indoors I found Meng-kee's relatives and family occupying the house, and was kindly asked to repeat my visits as before. This I intended to do, so that I might learn any accounts of the fugitives, especially as to the welfare of my beloved Loo A-Lee, but I was shortly afterwards obliged to leave Peking myself.





CHAPTER XVIII.

Flight of the Mandarin and his Daughter.—He shudders as they pass the place of execution.—Rough road for vehicles.—Arrive at Tungchow, where they meet the emissary.—Fear of detection.—They embark in a Junk on the Peiho River.—River life.—Loo A-Lee warns her father of the sinister motives of Cut-sing.—Pious reflections of father and daughter.



MY narrative now follows the fortunes of Meng-kee and A-Lee in their flight from Peking. They have since told me that it was a bright autumn morning when they left their home, but the fine weather failed to cheer up their spirits as the gates of the house closed on them for the last time. From the street in which Meng-kee lived, his chair-bearers took their way into the Chinese city, which is separated from the Tartar quarter by a high crenellated wall, having three massive gates, which are closed at night. This separation of the two races inhabiting the capital, shows that there is not much confidence between the subjugated natives and their Manchoo rulers. Nevertheless, the industrious character of the Chinaman has completely outstripped the indolent Tartar in his own exclusive quarter, where the trade is almost entirely in his hands. But the whole city is garrisoned by Manchoo soldiers, who have a guard at every gate.

When the party came to the Soon-chen gate, they were challenged by the guard, but allowed to pass through when

it was seen that the chair-bearers wore official mourning. Thence they passed due south along a wide thoroughfare, at the end of which was the execution ground. A shudder of horror thrilled through Meng-kee as he beheld the ghastly heads of criminals recently decapitated, stuck upon poles over the ground saturated with blood. The sight, however, had the effect of reassuring him that he had taken a proper step in getting out of reach of the sanguinary government, who would on the slightest suspicion have severed his head from his shoulders.

From this dismal spot the party proceeded into the central thoroughfare stretching north and south to the outer wall. Near the gates they entered a kind of caravanserai, having a spacious courtyard crowded with mules and vehicles. The chairs were set down at the door of a waiting-room, where Meng-kee and his daughter got out, and the chair-bearers were paid and discharged. A-Lee then entered an inner apartment, while her father proceeded to an office where the manager of the establishment was located.

In about an hour our fugitives with their baggage were seated in two wheel vehicles, in which they commenced their journey to Tung-chow. While passing through the street leading to the Yoon-ting gate, the rumbling of these clumsy carriages was bearable, but when they reached the dilapidated highway outside the walls it was intolerable. These Peking cabs, if they may be so called, have no springs, the shafts are large and strong, and the passenger has to squat on the floor, where cushions lie, but so great is the jolting that he has to hold on by the sides to ease the painful bumping. The only good part of the machine is an awning over the top, which shelters both man and beast from the powerful rays of the sun. Each vehicle is drawn by one mule.

The imperial highway from Peking to Tung-chow is thirteen miles long, averaging thirty feet wide, and is paved with stone slabs of great size. When constructed, many centuries ago, it must have been one of the grandest public works of the kind in the world. Now, however, it is worn into deep ruts, so that the vehicles roll about like ships in a sea-way, to the discomfort and danger of the passengers. A-Lee had extra cushions placed in her vehicle, but it was of no use, she was thoroughly shaken for four long hours before they reached the first stage of their journey, but from that point they would travel on to their destination in the comparatively luxurious cabin of a passenger-boat.

A-Lee was so fatigued with the journey that she begged of her father to rest in a house of accommodation at Tung-chow for the night. This he gladly assented to, for he was much in want of rest himself. Having seen her safely lodged, he went to hire a boat for the voyage down the Peiho. This he readily accomplished, selecting one of the best to be hired, and arranging with the boatmen to start early next day. These are fine, sturdy fellows, and their boats are strong and commodious. On returning to the inn he found Cut-sing awaiting him.

"Honourable sir," said the Taiping emissary in his blandest manner, "I rejoice to find that you and your daughter have arrived safe at Tung-chow, leaving the city of imps behind."

"Hush!" replied Meng-kee, "we must be guarded in our expressions, for sometimes walls have ears."

"There is no fear here, for I directed you to this house because it is in the hands of friends to our cause. Still, as you say, we must be careful. Indeed, I ought to be so, for my party who left Peking yesterday afternoon were challenged by the Manchoo guard at the gate, and were

sharply questioned by the officer in command. He concluded that we were traders going to Tien-tsin, in connection with the foreign soldiers there, and so let us pass without further question. Now, honourable sir, I think that if we are questioned by the mandarins on the river, it will be safest if we call ourselves your retinue."

"Certainly not," said Meng-kee, "this might endanger the safety of us all; for my papers show that I am not on official duty, and require no retinue. Go forward as if you were traders."

"But may I not travel in the same boat with you and your daughter?"

"On no account," he answered abruptly, and in a tone of voice that conveyed a rebuff to the obsequious emissary.

Next day all was in readiness to start at an early hour, and A-Lee had recovered from her fatigue. The boat her father had engaged was very comfortable, being provided with raised sleeping-places, and well covered in to protect the passengers from sun and rain. As the distance between Tung-chow and Tien-tsin is one hundred and seven miles, and the boats are sometimes three days on the passage, they are provided with cooking stoves and culinary utensils, so that the boatmen and passengers can have their meals on board. The fugitives, however, brought no servants with them from Peking, so a cook was hired for the journey, and a female servant to attend upon A-Lee.

In the neighbourhood of the town the river was thronged with junks and passenger-boats, through which it was not easy to pass. When they got lower down the stream they observed two other boats a-head, in one of which the Taiping emissary was seen. He was pointed out to A-Lee by her father, who related what had passed between them on

the previous night, and how he had spoken angrily to him when he asked to travel with them in the same boat.

"I told you, dearest father, that there was something sinister in that man's conduct, and that he strives hard to ingratiate himself with me. I have always behaved civilly to him, for I knew that he had you in his power and it was dangerous to offend him. I still think so, and you had better not incur his enmity, for he may yet harm both you and me."

"My dear daughter, you speak words of wisdom and prudence which I will follow." Whereupon Meng-kee stepped outside the covering of the boat, and stood on the raised part of the deck and waved his hand in a friendly way to Cut-sing, which the emissary returned.

Nothing worth noting happened as they sailed down the stream until the afternoon, when it came on a furious storm. In an instant the boatmen turned the stem of the boat into the river bank, and secured her by anchors on shore. They next arranged and secured by ropes the boat-hooks and oars over the uncovered part of the boat, and rigged matting over them, which kept the deck dry. These preparations were hardly completed when a severe gale, with rain, forked lightning, and thunder, set in. The storm continued for several hours, but cleared up before sunset. Then a gentle breeze succeeded, and the boat with its sails set again glided smoothly along.

"My daughter," remarked Meng-kee, who had been contemplating the gorgeous sunset in silence, "I hope that this tempest and its glorious termination may prove a faithful augury of our future career. If we have to encounter the storms of adversity or peril, let us bravely overcome them, in the hope that they will aid in the evening sunset of happiness to both you and me."

“My thoughts, dear father, were engaged in a similar train, and I feel that in our mutual interpretation of this augury we shall not be disappointed. Whatever betide I will use my utmost ability to aid you should days of distress surround us. And as our religion teaches us that there is One who will always listen to the prayers of those who are sincere believers, let us pray to God, through the Redeemer



RIVER LIFE.

Jesus Christ, to strengthen us for encountering the evils that may beset our path.”

With one accord father and daughter fell upon their knees, and lifting up their eyes towards the resplendent heavens, prayed earnestly to the Almighty to watch over them in their career.



CHAPTER XIX.

The Taiping emissary broods mischief.—A thunderstorm overtakes the Junks.—Rebel recruits in one of them.—They try to pass a customs station unnoticed.—Brought to by a shot from a mandarin gun-boat.—Obliged to land and cargo examined.—Cut-sing in danger, having an imperial robe in his trunk.—Meng-kee arriving opportunely saves him from arrest.

HOONG CUT-SING, the Taiping emissary, with his band of recruits, occupied one of the two boats which preceded that containing the mandarin and his daughter, the other being loaded with merchandise. As they dropped down the Peiho River, the boats kept within hail of each other. When the storm came on, and the mandarin's boat was moored alongside the right bank, Cut-sing gave orders to the boatmen to follow its example. Then all on board improved the occasion, notwithstanding the fury of the tempest, by partaking of their evening meal of rice and fish.

The Taiping emissary sat aloof from his companions in the stern of the boat, glancing furtively between the matting at the craft in the distance, as if to catch a glimpse of its inmates while lit up by the vivid flashes of lightning. His countenance wore its natural sinister expression as he brooded over the contemptuous manner in which he had been treated by Meng-kee, and the slights A-Lee had cast upon his advances.

"I will tame her proud spirit," thought he to himself. "She will be glad yet to share my rice with me and cling to me for protection. Her weak points are known to me, as concentrated in her intense devotion to her father. He is in my power should she thwart my designs, and I will threaten to sacrifice him if she continues to slight me or reject my suit. As to her foreign lover, she is not likely to meet with him again, so I need have no further apprehension of his being a rival. Even now they are both in my power, if I chose to gain my ends by declaring to the authorities that they are fugitives from Peking going to join the rebels. To do so, however, would lead to my own destruction. No! no! I must bide my time, until they enter the territory under the dominion of the Taipings."

While this train of evil thoughts was passing through his mind the storm was at its highest, and the reverberation of the thunder appeared to his fancy to echo his sentiments. When it cleared off his reflections gave way to the emergencies of the moment, and he became alive to the perils of the position in which he was placed. Although he had no reason to suspect the loyalty of his recruits to the Taiping cause, yet he dreaded, what was just possible, that at some unguarded moment one more simple than the others might divulge their secret. Hence he had planned their movements on the route so that they should avoid being seen by the authorities. As there was a customs station on the river under the charge of a mandarin, where passengers and goods were examined, he had arranged with the boatmen—who were friendly to the cause—to try and evade that post under cover of the darkness. The delay caused by the thunder-storm had thrown him out in his reckoning, and he eagerly inquired if they could now reach the spot before daylight.

To his consternation he learned that it was as much as the boats could do to sail so far by that time ; consequently, he gave orders to start at once without waiting for the mandarin's boat.

All was bustle now on board, and the passengers willingly assisted the boatmen to get their craft under way. These recruits were twenty in number, and formed a motley crew, even under a Chinese flag. Some had been ordinary tradesmen who had fallen into difficulties, and were indifferent as to the religious or political phase of the cause they had espoused so long as they could make something by it. Others were of even a less sincere frame of mind, who bent their thoughts upon plunder during the raids of the Taiping hordes on the industrious loyal inhabitants. Only a few of them joined the movement from religious convictions, and these were Christian converts like Meng-kee. One motive, however, united them to join the rebellion, and that was to aid in overthrowing the obnoxious Manchow-Tartar power, and restore the ancient Chinese rule.

The majority of these men were not without means, as the second boat was well laden with merchandise which was likely to find a profitable market where they were going. Moreover, this cargo of goods would give colour to their ostensible object as traders proceeding to traffic with the foreign troops at Tien-tsin.

At starting the breeze was light but favorable, and continued so well into the night. Most of the adventurers were confident of passing the barrier station without molestation before daylight, and after drinking their tea and smoking their pipes they lay down to sleep. About midnight, however, they were aroused from their slumbers by

the boatmen calling on them to rise and assist in propelling the boats by oars, as it was almost a calm, and they were yet many miles from the mandarin's post.

Up jumped the sleepers with alacrity, and manned the steer-oars of the two boats. There was only one to each boat, but they were enormous sweeps, requiring two pair of hands to scull with. The labour was heavy to those unaccustomed to it, but they worked with a will, making good progress where the current was most favorable. Then the breeze freshened towards morning and the sails were lowered. As the dawn lightened the horizon over the Gulf of Pee-chee-lee, the two banners, which are hoisted as official insignia at every custom-house station were fluttering in the breeze.

Up to this, the scullers with the heavy, long sweeps kept time by singing a Chinese sailor's refrain, accompanied by stamping with their feet on the deck, as the handle of the sweep was swung to and fro, which had a spirit-stirring effect upon the men. Now as they approached the customs station the song and tramp were hushed. Silently and softly the boats were propelled by the huge oars, and there was every prospect of their passing it without being observed. As they neared the post, it was seen, to their dismay, that a gunboat belonging to the Chinese navy was at anchor in the river. This class of vessels are not so formidable as those in our own navy, yet they are well armed and manned for native warfare.

Steering close in shore on the opposite bank, they tried to slip past unnoticed, but when they came abaft of the gunboat, a dog on board commenced barking, which raised an alarm, and the watch on deck hailed them to stop. No notice was taken of this, excepting to ply the sweeps more

vigorously. Unfortunately for the adventurers, the river at this point formed a straight long reach, without a tree or shrub on the banks to screen the boats from the outlook at the station. That they were visible from there was soon unpleasantly evident, for the gunboat fired a shot right ahead of their course. Then they observed her unmooring and preparing to give chase.

Matters now began to look serious, and it became a question whether they should risk the chance of escaping or bring to at once. Cut-sing and his recruits were for attempting the former, but the boatmen were resolved on the latter. A second shot which struck the water not far from the leading boat settled the question, and it was deemed most prudent to stop and sail back to the customs station. Accordingly the boats' heads were veered round, and the sails hoisted to the favouring breeze up the river. In order to avoid suspicion also, the passengers were told to resume their sleeping places, as if they had nothing to do with working the boats.

The commander of the gunboat seeing them retiring under sail ceased his preparations for a chase. When they came within hail he rated the boatmen soundly for attempting to pass without reporting their passengers and cargo at the station. They humbly excused themselves by saying there were no goods on board liable to duty, and that the passengers were going to trade with the foreign troops at Tien-tsin. Cut-sing corroborated this statement, and begged in the most humble manner that he and his fellow-passengers should be allowed to proceed on their voyage. This the commander peremptorily objected to, saying that he had strict orders from the government to examine all boats and passengers on the

Peiho, since the occupation of the country by the "barbarian" soldiers.

On shore the officials at the station had turned out, and the mandarin in charge gave orders to his underlings to see that the suspicious craft were hauled alongside the river bank for examination. When this was effected he ordered the passengers to land with their baggage, while the merchandise in the cargo-boat was inspected. Nothing subject to the transit dues was found, as they are levied chiefly on imported articles or native produce on its way from the maritime provinces into the interior, of which salt is one of the most highly-taxed commodities.

The passengers were then marched up to the custom-house, where each person was questioned separately, and his trunk or bundle examined. Here no contraband articles were seized, but when the inspector opened a sheepskin-covered trunk, having one of the curious brass padlocks of the Chinese, he pulled out a gorgeous mandarin's robe of yellow satin, embroidered with the imperial dragon.

"Hi-yah!" exclaimed the commander of the gun-boat; "whose trunk is this?"

No one acknowledged himself to be the owner until the head boatman was interrogated, when he pointed out Foong Cut-sing, whose name was stamped on the trunk. As it was no use evading the ownership, the Taiping emissary at once declared it to be his.

"Your excellency," continued the naval officer, addressing the customs official, "this is no case of smuggling; but I am specially enjoined to seize all articles bearing the imperial insignia in the possession of our countrymen, since the sacking and burning of the emperor's palace of Yuen-

ming-yuen; and this robe of the imperial yellow pattern appears to be part of the plunder!"

"Hi-yah!" replied his colleague, "this matter must be investigated. Clear the court of all these people and their baggage, excepting this man and his trunk, that we may question him." Upon saying which he ascended to his official chair, accompanied by the commander of the gunboat, who ordered a guard of armed men from his vessel into court.

When all was ready for his examination Cut-sing was surrounded by the guard and customs officials. It required all his nerve to face the matter boldly while he braced himself up for the worst that might befall him, as he had done on many a previous occasion.

"How came you by that imperial robe?" was the first question of the customs mandarin.

"I bought it at a clothes shop in Peking," answered Cut-sing; "I can give you the man's name and address, and here is the receipt for the robe and other articles, where you will see that I paid him a fair price for it," handing up a note to the magistrate. It was critically examined, and there was no reason to doubt the statement given.

"But were you not aware that the robe was stolen from the summer palace?"

"No! I was told that it had been a dress worn by some actor in a theatre, who became poor and sold it to get food."

"That is false! See you not that it is rich satin of the imperial colour, embroidered, and of a shape only worn by the emperor and high officers of state?"

"Being a poor, ignorant man, I know not these things."

"What, then, were you intending to do with it?"

"Your excellency, I am a small trader, and thought of making profit by its sale at Tien-tsin."

"Ah! to these cursed barbarians, who have robbed our celestial monarch of his choicest wardrobes," struck in the naval commander. "They shall never handle it. By the authority I hold, I seize it, and take you a prisoner to Peking, where you will be confronted with the shop-keeper."

"Oh, do not take me prisoner, your noble excellency!" Cut-sing responded. "You may take the robe, but let me go my way in peace."

"You are a suspicious-looking character," remarked the customs mandarin. "Is there any person of respectability among your fellow-passengers who will vouch for your honesty?"

"Yes! yes!" he exclaimed in trepidation; "all of them can do so, and will become bond for me if necessary. Besides, there is a mandarin coming down the river in a boat who will befriend me. And there he is," pointing to the door.

At this juncture Meng-kee appeared upon the threshold of the custom-house, and walked in with his usual dignified manner, bowing politely to the magistrate on the bench, who returned his salutations, while they invited him to sit beside them. The case was explained, the robe displayed, and the reference made by the owner to him as one who could vouch for his honesty. Meng-kee replied very guardedly, stating, however, that he had known Cut-sing in Peking, and had no reason to doubt his statement of having purchased the robe in ignorance of its being imperial property. Besides, they had the name and address of the clothes' vendor, who could be punished for receiving it.

After a short consultation it was agreed that Cut-sing should be allowed to prosecute his voyage, with the other passengers, taking with him all his effects, excepting the imperial robe. He made many abject obeisances to the mandarins on hearing their decision, and was profuse in his thanks to Meng-kee.

By this time the morning was well advanced, and the sun shone brightly, with a brisk breeze from the east, which was pretty favourable for the voyage to Tien-tsin. It may be supposed that the boatmen and their passengers were rejoiced to get under way from such a dangerous neighbourhood, and that the Taiping emissary thought himself fortunate in getting out of a difficulty which at first threatened to be so serious. However, he could not help deploring the loss of the beautiful robe, for which he expected to get a high price from one of the Taiping chiefs, who would have prized it and worn it as a veritable regal costume.





CHAPTER XX.

Meng-kee questioned by the Magistrate.—He discourses on the social duties.—A Chinese Naval Officer.—He is inquisitive in seeing Loo A-Lee.—He talks largely of taking revenge on the “barbarian” forces.—His boastful voice hushed by the approach of British troops on their way to Tien-tsin, with banners flying and trumpets sounding.

MENG-KEE inwardly congratulated himself on the satisfactory termination of the difficulty Cut-sing got into. Had he been detained, it is just possible that he might have involved the mandarin in his troubles by divulging his sympathy with the Taiping cause. In order to prevent any suspicion that the customs official or the naval officer might entertain regarding his relations with a common trader, he explained that he had furnished robes to the Board of Rites and Ceremonies, of which he was an officer. This explanation at once disarmed them of any suspicion, and they soon became on familiar terms, especially as the customs mandarin remembered seeing his visitor in that imperial bureau.

“What may have caused you, honourable sir, to leave your post in these critical times, to journey southwards?” inquired that official in a grave tone of voice: his grizzled queue and wrinkled features betokened him to be bordering on threescore and ten years.

"Venerable sir ! I heard from my relatives in Yang-chow, that my aged mother was ill, and might soon depart this life to mingle among the shades of our ancestors. I therefore deem it my duty to aid in consoling her on her death-bed, and have obtained permission to proceed thither."

"Thou speakest well !" responded his questioner sentimentously. "Remember the maxim laid down by the immortal sage Kong-foo-tsze (Confucius) : 'Filial duty is the root of virtue, and the stem from which instruction in moral principles springs forth.' Also the first of the sacred edicts promulgated by the Emperor Kang-hee : 'Be strenuous in filial piety and fraternal respect, that you may thus duly perform the social duties.' This filial piety is a doctrine from heaven, the consummation of earthly justice, the grand principle of action among mankind. The man who knows not piety to parents can surely not have considered the affectionate hearts of parents towards their children. When still infants in arms, hungry, they could not feed themselves; cold, they could not clothe themselves; but they had their parents, who watched the sounds of their voice and studied the traits of their countenance; who were joyful when they smiled, afflicted when they wept; who followed them step by step when they moved; who, when they were sick or in pain, refused food or sleep on their account. Thus were they nursed and trained till they grew up to manhood."

Although Meng-kee had long discarded the worship of ancestors and other superstitious tenets connected with the so-called religion of China, as expounded by the ancient sages, yet he revered in all its axioms the moral doctrine of filial duty which they inculcated. Indeed, it is so much in accordance with the divine commandment, "Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the

land," that it will acceptable to every sincere Christian. Accordingly, Meng-kee listened to the homily of the worthy mandarin with becoming respect.

"Are you travelling alone?" he inquired further.

"My daughter accompanies me, honourable sir, and she will be glad to pay her respects to you if you would deign to visit our humble boat."

The commander of the gunboat, who had paid but little attention to the grave conversation of his colleagues, pricked up his ears on hearing that there was a lady in the newly-arrived boat. He was a young man of rather a dashing appearance, evidently priding himself upon the gay uniform he wore. It must not be supposed that in shape and decorations it differed from those worn by officers in the army, for the two services in China are so amalgamated that the commanders of the land forces have sometimes authority over the naval forces, and naval commanders over land forces. Consequently there is no distinction in uniform, and it frequently happens that a naval officer is a more efficient soldier than a sailor, while sometimes, indeed, the commander-in-chief of an army belongs to neither of these services, but holds his appointment as the governor of a province, with his literary degree from the Hanlin examinations. Such is the anomalous rank of officials in China, which fairly puzzled the early Portuguese to classify according to European usage. Hence they adopted the general term "Mandarin" (from mandar, to command) for all government officers, so used by foreigners to this day.

Judging from his strut, Meng-kee concluded that the commander of the gunboat was more of a military than a naval officer, who was probably appointed on special service to keep an eye upon the foreign troops travelling

between Peking and Tien-tsin. Be that as it may, he welcomed him and his elder colleague with great courtesy on board the passenger-boat.

Loo A-Lee was taken somewhat by surprise on the entrance of these two officials into the cabin, for she feared that something wrong had happened to her father. He soon, however, dissipated her fears by recounting what had occurred at the station, and the departure of the other two boats. She expressed herself in choice terms to her visitors, and, as the morning meal was just preparing, invited them to partake of the humble fare on board, which was politely accepted.

"Do you visit these 'barbarian' troops at Tien-tsin on your way to Yang-chow?" the gallant officer asked Meng-kee, after he had done justice to the fish, fowl, and rice served up.

"No, I think not. Unless we require some comforts for my daughter at that town for the remainder of our journey, we will not visit the place, but ascend to the entrance of the grand canal."

"You are right; and I am sure your fair daughter would not wish to look upon these Fan-kwei."

This term, which does not sound very polite when translated for foreign ears, brought a blush to the cheeks of Loo A-Lee. The blush was observed by the gallant commander, who, misinterpreting its purport, addressed her.

"Hi-yah!" he exclaimed, "you may well blush at the name of these outside barbarians, who have brought disaster into the land, and dishonoured the name of our late emperor. Ah! if the generals had only taken my advice, not one of these redcoats would have landed alive. We could have had all our gunboats ranged along the

shore, five hundred in number, so that not a boat with troops could pass between, and as these came on we would have swept them into the sea, leaving not one alive. Ah ! if I was only a commander-in-chief, even now I could drive the boasting cowards out of Tien-tsin. Let them come on. I could kill a hundred with my own hand in battle. Let them come down the river, and I would blow the rascals out of the water like—”

Here he suddenly stopped in his valiant speech, as he rose to show how he would annihilate the enemy, when his voice was arrested by hearing the sound of a brass band spreading its martial music over the murmuring waters. On looking up the stream there he saw approach a line of boats filled with British soldiers, whose bayonets glittered like a forest of steel in the morning sun. It was a stirring sight, and sent a thrill of delight through A-Lee's heart; but it had a very different effect upon our Chinese Captain Bobadil, who took his departure suddenly, and was followed by the customs official, who excused himself that he had his duties to perform.

On came the boats in gallant array, the blast of trumpets and the roll of drums increasing as they passed the station.

Meng-kee observed that the duties performed by the officials were to make obeisance in the most humble form, and to bang away at their gongs in token of respect to the much-hated foreigners who had conquered their army and navy.

As it was not judicious to remain longer at this place, Meng-kee gave orders to the boatmen to get under way immediately; and they followed in the rear of the British-freighted boats, to the chagrin of the dandy officer, who had been smitten at first sight with the charms of A-Lee.



CHAPTER XXI.

Journeying on the Grand Canal.—Scenery by the way.—Junks tracked by men.—Peasantry rough in manner.—Implements rude.—Desolation of Lin-tsing, destroyed by the Taipings.—Carts propelled by sails and steered.—The fugitives cross the Yellow River, called "China's Sorrow."—Its course shifted from east to north outlet.—They arrive at Yang-chow, where the canal joins the Yang-tsze River.—The native city of Meng-kee.—Reception of him and his daughter at their parental home.



LOO MENG-KEE ordered the boatmen to follow the flotilla of troop-boats, keeping within view of the last one, and on no account to attempt to pass them should even their speed be lessened. He knew that the Taiping emissary and his recruits were ahead, and he had no desire to come into contact with them. By keeping in the wake of the British transports until they reached the junction of the Grand Canal with the Peiho, their boat could pass the western suburb of Tien-tsin unnoticed, at which place he expected Cut-sing would be waiting for him.

The weather continued fine throughout the day, and the breeze became more favourable, so that the boats sailed along swiftly, reaching the junction early in the afternoon. Here the flotilla dropped their sails, and the boats were rowed easterly to the city, while that of Meng-kee sailed westerly, and in a few miles entered the famous Grand

Canal, which intersects four of the most fertile provinces in China, from north to south, over a distance of 650 miles.

After passing a bridge of boats, an extensive prospect of the country on both sides opened up to view, as the level of the canal is several feet above the surrounding plain. Here a very laborious method of irrigation is adopted by dipping buckets into the canal and throwing the water into a tank, from which it is carried along small channels into the adjoining fields. At some places where the banks are high, two tiers of labourers may be seen drawing and pouring water into the tanks.

While the wind was fair it was extremely pleasant sailing along the canal for the first ten or fifteen miles. Not only are the banks in fine order and beautifully sloped, but in many places well wooded, which gives a pleasing variety to the otherwise monotonous landscape. In contrast to this is the ruinous appearance of the towns and villages by the way. The houses are built of mud-bricks dried in the sun, and plastered with clay and straw, giving them a poverty-stricken appearance.

As they reached a village named Pa-tow, the wind seemed to have suddenly shifted right ahead. It was not so; but in consequence of the canal being tortuous at this place—the channel of a stream having been taken advantage of in its construction—the boat had to wind round the reaches, making the distance more than double by water what it is by land. Here there were a number of boats starting in company; the boatmen, having disembarked, attached a long rope to the top of each mast, and marched along the right bank in single file, chanting songs to help them to keep time. Some large boats filled with produce had as many as twenty men tracking them. On the opposite

bank another string of boats were proceeding northward, altogether presenting a very animated scene on the Grand Canal.

The inhabitants of this region are much less refined than in the more southern provinces, having a more boorish aspect, and their agricultural operations are performed in a ruder manner. In ploughing, they use horses, mules, asses, and oxen indiscriminately, and occasionally women may be seen in the yoke. Sometimes the whole live stock and household turn into the field to plough, man and beast doing labour like. Otherwise the absence of animal life is remarkable. There is no game to be seen, and of birds the magpie is the only kind that abounds, the Chinese having a superstitious regard for them, as they frequent the tombs, and thereby are supposed to be possessed of the spirits of their ancestors.

At length the boat with Meng-kee and his daughter arrived safely at Lin-tsing, where the canal bifurcates; a small branch leading to the south-west, while the main channel proceeds in a south-easterly direction. This was once a fine old city of the third order in Chinese topography, but when the mandarin landed to call upon some friends, he found it a mass of ruins; the suburbs, which extend for two miles along the east bank of the canal, being the only habitable part of a once flourishing town. On inquiry as to the cause of this destruction, he was informed that the Taiping rebels had captured it some years before, and levelled it with the ground after burning and sacking the shops and houses. This was the first example he had seen of the desolating warfare carried on by the army of the so-called "Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace," whose cause he had espoused, and the contemplation of the ruins

gave a great shock to his feelings. "If this be the manner," he said to himself, "in which they spread the doctrines of Christianity and peace, then are they hypocrites and deceivers. I must wait, however, until I can question some of the chiefs upon this matter."

The boat having been hired only as far as Lin-tsing, Meng-kee and his daughter had to disembark and hire another for the remainder of their journey. Here the passenger boats were very inferior to the one they had left, as the owners of the better class did not care to venture near the districts occupied by the rebels, who had always an eye to comfort and luxury in their depredations on the peaceable inhabitants.

After a day's rest they resumed their voyage on the canal where it intersects a country more interesting than what they had hitherto traversed. In one tract extensive cotton plantations covered the land, and in another large flocks of sheep were seen grazing on the pasture. Whole families, especially the females, were everywhere busy in the cotton-field picking the cotton-wool, while the men were employed in shearing the sheep. These animals have huge flat tails, three, four, or five pounds in weight, and many of them with black heads and white bodies. There is also a curious hybrid in this part of China between the sheep and goat, where the animal sheds its wool annually and exhibits the smooth hair underneath.

On these extensive plains the mode of carrying produce by land is curious, where the propelling power is the wind, and the vehicle an adaptation of a canal boat with sails. Some of them are as large as a spring-cart, but with only one wheel in the middle, the sides being so finely balanced and loaded that they do not topple over. The sail is

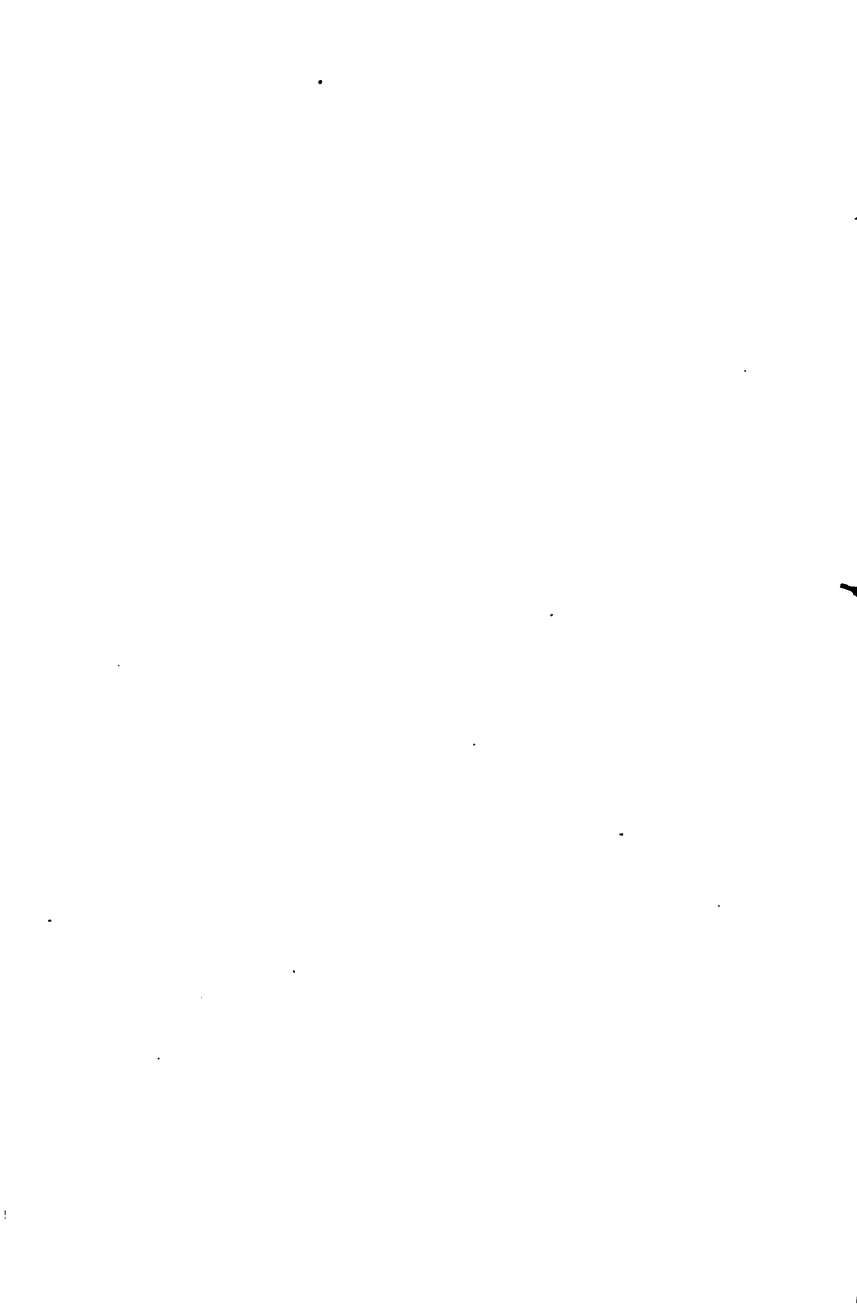
hoisted on a mast in the forepart of the vehicle, and is so rigged as to be raised, or reefed at pleasure by the steersman, who walks behind with the braces attached to a hook by his side. There is an immense strain upon him when he has to guide the vehicle according to the velocity of the wind. Nevertheless they will carry six heavy bales of cotton, or more than half a ton of bean-cake, on one machine.

Through this fertile region Meng-kee and his daughter sailed smoothly and rapidly along the Grand Canal for two days, passing some flourishing cities, which the Taipings had not visited, until one morning the monotonous level of the landscape was broken by the appearance of a low range of hills to the south. At the base of these hills ran the famous Yellow River, which has been fitly designated "China's Sorrow," from the devastation caused by its floods upon the surrounding country through which it formerly passed on its lower course to the Yellow Sea. Even that course has recently changed, and a new outlet has been formed in the Gulf of Pe-che-lee by this most erratic and devastating stream. From time immemorial the character of this river has been the burden of the ancient sages and princes, in their lamentations of the people's sufferings.

It was with some difficulty, and no small degree of danger, that their boat was taken across the turbid torrent of the river. In order to effect an entrance to the canal on its southern bank, the boatmen dragged their craft some distance up the stream, then re-embarked, and guided it over with their powerful sweeps to the opposite side, where the current was least felt. While crossing, Meng-kee was impressed with the mighty volume of water in this river, which has been compared to a yellow dragon monster eating up the land along its course.



CHINESE MODE OF RAISING WATER.



At length they arrived safely at that part of the canal where it joins the greatest of all the Chinese rivers, the famous Yang-tsze Kiang. However, as Meng-kee's destination was some twenty miles distant from that point, they disembarked from the boat, settled with the boatmen, and proceeded by land to Yang-chow, in one of the clumsy vehicles of the district.

This was the native city of Meng-kee, where he had been educated in the Chinese classics, by which he obtained his degree at the triennial competition in the provincial capital, that qualified him for his government post at Peking. Many years had elapsed since his previous visit, and great changes had come over the surrounding country from the incursions of the Taipings. He knew that they had attempted the capture of Yang-chow, but were driven off with great slaughter by the imperialist forces. Still he was anxious to see if the town had suffered much during the engagement, and it was with no small feeling of satisfaction that he beheld the pagodas and campanile towers appearing uninjured as they rose above the crenellated walls illuminated by the rays of the setting sun.

At the city gate the mandarin and his daughter left the vehicle, and hired sedan-chairs and porters to convey them and their baggage to the home of his aged mother. It was no false excuse on his part to have obtained permission to visit her on account of serious illness, for he had received letters from his relatives stating that his widowed mother was on her death-bed. As he neared the quarter of the city in which she dwelt, his heart throbbed with emotion at the possibility of being too late to see her alive. When the chairs stopped at the gate of the family mansion he felt reassured, as he did not see the usual announcement of a

death in the house, by a tablet suspended at the door-post inscribed with the name, age, and honours of the departed.

The mandarin embraced his beloved daughter as he led her towards the inner chambers, which she had left when quite a child with her mother, who had died at Peking not long after their arrival there. "Welcome, my child!" he said, "to the home of your ancestors; and although our faith is changed from theirs, yet it is incumbent on us not to disturb the family harmony by disputing with our kindred on the occasion of our visit."

"Dearest father," she replied, "I will obey you in everything."

At the threshold of the inner apartments they were most cordially received by the families of Meng-kee's two brothers, who inhabited the family mansion, of which his mother, on her sick-bed, was still the acknowledged superior. This is one of the apparently anomalous customs in China, where females generally hold a degraded position, but it is based upon the ancient patriarchal communities, where the eldest bears rule.

Father and daughter were ushered into the sick-chamber, where the octogenarian lady lay propped up in a stately bedstead; her withered features and glassy eyes scarcely giving indications of life, certainly not of recognition, as they knelt before her and spoke some affectionate words. She herself had been speechless for some weeks, and it was evident that the vital lamp would be soon extinguished.





CHAPTER XXII.

Death and Burial of the Mandarin's Mother.—Curious customs followed after her decease.—Remains lie in state twenty-one days.—Funeral Procession.—The chief mourner utters a prayer at the tomb.—He then presents the sacrificial offerings.—The burial ceremony ended, a tablet is deposited on the shelves of the ancestral hall.—Ceremonies attending the worship of ancestors.—Chinese conceptions of a future state.—Burnt offerings.

LOO A-LEE and her father were assiduous in their attentions at the bedside of their dying progenitor. Frequently but secretly they murmured prayers to the Almighty that her soul would be acceptable in his eyes, for she had been a most exemplary wife and mother. Meng-kee had two older brothers, and according to the laws of consanguinity he was bound to look up to them as his superiors in the event of their mother's demise. Accordingly they, in conformity with immemorial custom, removed the bed of their dying parent into the inner hall, placing it in the middle of the apartment, with her head lying eastward. In this position she remained for several days without much consciousness, when she breathed her last calmly and free from pain.

As soon as this was observed, a little cotton wool was put into the nostrils to see if there was still breath to move it. No movement being perceptible, the body was laid out on

a mat upon the floor, and covered with a shroud. The eldest son then took a porcelain bowl, into which he put two coins, and covered it with a cloth. With this he went into the garden to a picturesque pond in the middle, and throwing the coins into the water, dipped the bowl in and filled it. Returning to the hall, he washed the corpse, and afterwards gave orders to announce his mother's death to all their kindred, and suspend a tablet at the portals of the entrance, inscribed with her name, age, and honours.

These preliminaries having been done, the whole household assembled in the hall and commenced wailing for the dead, most of them, both male and female, casting off their ornaments, dishevelled their hair, and baring their feet, in token of their grief. The eldest son then presented a food-offering to the deceased, and poured a libation of wine at her feet.

For three days the dutiful sons of the deceased lady remained by the side of her corpse, dressed in white sack-cloth, which is the costume of grief and mourning amongst the Chinese, as it was with the ancient Jews. During that period the friends of the bereaved family visited them, also clothed in white mourning apparel, the texture of the female garb being finer than that of the males, and all having white bandages round their heads. These mourners, on entering the chamber of the dead, joined their lamentations with those of the family, and afterwards silently took their departure.

Meanwhile an elegant coffin, made of scented wood, elaborately carved with flowers and gilded figures, was placed in the hall, upon which the visitors put tokens of respect for the deceased. On the third day these were removed, the lid taken off, and little packages of lime

placed in the bottom and sides. Then the body was uncovered and dressed in the best robes worn in its lifetime, with a willow twig in the right hand, a fan and handkerchief in the left hand, bracelets on the arms, and ear-rings in the ears. At last a piece of money was put in the mouth, and the body placed in the coffin, which was afterwards hermetically sealed.

Upon closing the coffin, the chief mourner then uttered the following prayer:—"I, Loo Choong-ming, an orphan, presume to announce clearly to my late parent, that I, bitterly weeping for the mother of the house, say:—Sorrows have multiplied upon myself, and misery upon my mother; a sickness overcame her, and from the nine fountains she will never return. In now putting her into the coffin, she receives my just punishment. O my mother, my earth! How can you endure this. Ah, alas! my grief is great." Saying which he hung up over the coffin a slip of blue paper—to represent the ancestral tablet—on which was written, in golden characters, the name, surname, accomplishments, and virtues of his deceased mother.

After this the remains lay in state for "thrice seven" days, according to the ritual laid down by law. During that period there was an incessant arrival and departure of visitors, who came to condole with the family, and when these were persons of distinction, their presence was announced by three loud reports of fire-crackers. When the twenty-one days had expired, there was a great assemblage of relatives, friends, and hired people to assist at the burial.

As the funeral procession proceeded from the house along the streets, it was accompanied by a band of musicians, chiefly playing upon a kind of clarionet, who performed

solemn dirges at intervals. These were preceded by a person scattering paper money to buy the goodwill of malicious, wandering elves, that they might not molest the spirit of the deceased on its way to the grave. Following the musicians were men carrying ornamental banners and flags bearing inscriptions of a general nature, with notices to the people to retire aside from the procession. Then came a number of light wooden structures in the shape of pavilions, each containing fruit, cakes, comfits, or animal food, as portions of the sacrifice, and one, superbly decorated, sent forth volumes of fragrant incense. After the sacrificial viands came a retinue of priests, preceded by lanterns showing the name of their monastery, and an altar containing their implements of divination. Then followed some of the relatives and servants, the latter bearing trays of refreshments for the mourners. Next came a splendid shrine containing the family tablet of the dead, supported by her nephews and grandchildren, and surrounded by a number of boys and girls carrying baskets of flowers and little banners having appropriate devices. The coffin and mourners then brought up the chief feature of the procession, the former having a richly embroidered silk pall of many colours, with a fringe reaching nearly to the ground, and carried by eight bearers.

In front of it walked, or rather tottered, the chief mourner, habited in sackcloth, and supported under the arms by two servants, exhibiting the greatest sorrow, as if he was just ready to drop down with grief. His head had not been shaven since his mother's death; his clothes were awry, and his aspect altogether negligent and slovenly. Behind the coffin came the other members of the family and a crowd of mourners, the females being carried in sedan-

chairs and giving vent to their lamentations. The rear of the procession was brought up by a number of servants, some of whom carried the grandchildren of tender years upon their backs. The cemetery being outside the walls of the city, the procession had to pass through one of the gates, where it was augmented by friends and sympathizers, attracted by respect or curiosity, until it stretched to more than half a mile in length, when it reached the burial-ground. The tomb was shaped like a pyramid, with an entrance for the coffin, which was not interred in a grave-pit, but placed on the surface of the ground. When this last part of the ceremony was performed, the chief mourner uttered the following prayer :—

“ I beg to announce to my parent, that since my mother cast off this world and departed, I shall cherish my grief to the end of my days; and have constantly kept it in my own breast morning and evening, yet sorrowing in vain. Having divined favourable auguries, with thankfulness I come here to a fortunate spot where the wind dwells, and the dragon’s pulse rests. On this auspicious day I take up the coffin and place it within the tomb. The form of the dead is there, but the spirit returns to the ancestral hall, where it will remain for thousands of generations. Being now settled in this place which is so beautiful and desirable, may you abundantly illuminate your posterity, that happiness and emoluments may be granted them, obtained by your goodness. Be pleased to regard this.”

Having repeated this from a written scroll, he burned it, and then presented the sacrificial offerings, saying :—“ My parents are reposing quietly in their dark abode, the sextons have finished their work, the cypresses are freshly waving around, and I with sincere feelings prostrate myself, begging

to accept the sacrifice of clean viands here spread out, and cause happiness to descend, through the merit of the living and the dead, for ever upon this place."

Here the burial ceremony ended; the mourners returned to the family mansion, and the procession was dispersed. Then all the relatives of the deceased assembled in the "Hall of Ancestors," where her tablet was formally installed among the congregation of tablets in the *lararium*. This ancestral tablet was made of chestnut; twelve *tsun* high to represent the twelve months, four *tsun* broad to denote the four seasons, and twelve *fan* thick to represent the twelve hours. The top was rounded to represent heaven, and the bottom flat, as the Chinese representation of the earth. The tablet was deposited on one of the shelves in the hall, where there were many others ranged in chronological order, the number gradually increasing downward, beginning with the founder of the family down to the last generation. In the back of the tablet a small square hole was dug out, having a sliding cover, in which a paper was placed giving the dates of the birth and death of the deceased, the number of her children, and where she was buried. An inscription of the same kind was afterwards placed on the tombstone, with the substitution of the family residence for the place of burial, the date when the interment took place, and the names of those who set it up. No sentimental inscriptions, like those on tombstones in European graveyards, such as lines of poetry, texts, records of labour, or biographical laudations, are ever found in China. Yet the Chinese never cease to reverence the memory of their ancestors, which is so persistent, and involves so much of devotion on their part, that it amounts to a kind of worship, unknown in any other nation on the earth.

The ceremonies attending this worship of deceased relations are few, and easily performed. A servant, a child, or the keeper of the family ancestral hall, lights a few incense sticks every morning and evening, and bows before the tablets and shrines as he thrusts them into an iron tripod full of the ashes. On the new and full moons, he buys a few candles and gilt papers, and burns them in the family sanctuary and at the threshold. In the spring and autumn, he repairs to the tombs with prayers and petitions, accompanying his worship with fire-crackers, burning paper money, and offering a sacrifice of flesh, fruits, and spirituous liquors, which he then carries home to furnish a feast for the household. The occasion calls together the scattered members of the family, and the annual reunion being accompanied with good cheer and the pleasant company of affectionate relatives, the so-called worship of ancestors is indelibly associated in the minds of young and old, with the most delightful recollections of youth. There is nothing revolting or obscene, no celebration of bacchanalian orgies, no horrid sacrifices of human beings, in all these rites. Everything connected with them is orderly, kind, simple, and decorous, calculated to strengthen the family relationship, cement the affection between brothers and sisters, and encourage sentiments of filial reverence and obedience. In the course of ages it has had great influence in the formation of the Chinese character, in upholding good order, promoting industry, and cultivating habits of peaceful thrift, beyond all estimation.

Yet with all these kindly family and social relations, these and similar quasi-religious festivals engender the grossest superstitions regarding a future existence. According to the Chinese the world of spirits is analogous to this physical

world. As in this life it is impossible to live without food, or to obtain comforts and luxuries without money, so in the life to come they hold that the same state of things prevails. Hence, those who wish to benefit their departed relatives, not only make meat-offerings to them, but supply them with a sham representation of money to pay their current expenses. In order to remit cash into the invisible world, they procure paper imitations of ingots, about four inches square, in the middle of which are affixed patches of tin-foil or gold-leaf, as representations of gold and silver money. These they set fire to and believe that they are thus transformed into real bullion, passing through the smoke into the invisible world.





CHAPTER XXIII.

Meng-kee meets Cut-sing at the Cemetery.—He relates how his party fared after they parted.—Also how the Taiping movement progresses successfully.—Meng-kee agrees to proceed at once to Nanking.—He asks his daughter to remain at his ancestral home.—She implores him to allow her to accompany him.—He at last agrees to it.—The party sails up the Yang-tsze River in a passage junk.

DURING the burial ceremony at the tombs, Meng-kee observed, with some uneasiness, the Taiping emissary among the crowd of spectators. Their eyes met, and he gave the mandarin a significant glance, as if he would wish to speak with him. Thinking it best to do so, he nodded an assent, and after the service, stepping aside from the throng, whispered to him to meet him there on the following day at noon.* Punctually to the hour, Meng-kee and Cut-sing saluted each other in the retired Vale of the Tombs. Here they could converse without being heard by any eavesdropper,

* With the Chinese the day is divided into twelve parts, so that one of their hours is equal to two of ours. They have no native machine for reckoning by minutes or seconds, but they have a sundial where the hour is divided into eight parts, corresponding to the subdivision of our quarters. From this division of time approximating to the European mode of reckoning, watches and clocks are greatly sought after by the wealthy people who can afford to purchase them.

who might inform upon them. The mandarin was the first to open the conversation.

"Well, Cut-sing," he asked, in a friendly manner, "how have you and your companions fared since you left the Customs station, where you might have got into trouble if I had not come up in time to your relief?"

"Many thanks, honourable sir, to you for your help. I had, indeed, a narrow escape from being sent back to Peking, as our party heard afterwards that many had been punished for having articles from the plundered palace in their possession. It had the effect, however, of making us more careful in our movements, and we resolved to be practically what we had called ourselves, namely, traders; so when we arrived at Tien-tsin we sold all our merchandise, in case some spies might be watching us. We then left the city by twos and threes unobserved, and did not meet again until we reached Lin-tsing."

"We stopped there also," Meng-kee remarked, assuming a grave expression of countenance; "and its desolate aspect gave a sad pang to my heart; for there, in my younger days, I had some dearly-beloved friends, and when I went to seek for them their houses were in ruins, while they have either fallen victims in the fight, or fled for their lives. It produced in me such a revulsion of feeling, that I wished I had not espoused a cause that brought such desolation on the land."

"Say not so, noble sir," rejoined the Taiping emissary, in his blandest manner and tone of voice; "such are the chances of war. Lin-tsing was garrisoned by the Tartar forces, who threatened to destroy our first northern legion on their campaign through the province of Shan-tung, and the Chung-wang sent a strong force to their relief, which

dispersed the enemy and destroyed their stronghold in that town. But this and other places will be restored when the Taiping rule is firmly established."

"What you state certainly qualifies the conduct of your army, but it is plain that the peaceable and industrious inhabitants are the chief sufferers in this internecine strife, and the sooner it is brought to a close one way or the other, the better will it be for our distracted country."

"There is every prospect of that consummation taking place within a short time. On my way this far along the canal I met with some of our friends who have lately come up the Yang-tsze Kiang, who report that nearly every city and town between Nanking and the seacoast are in possession of our brave troops. The only place of importance not yet captured is Shanghai, where the foreigners have a settlement and carry on a large trade. When that seaport is in our possession we will be able to have numerous war-junks to defend our posts from the attacks of the imperial gunboats. At present these are mostly in the southern harbours, refitting after the damage sustained in fighting the foreign ships, so that the Great River up to Nanking is free from their presence. Now is the safest time we have yet had to navigate that mighty stream."

As the wily emissary dilated upon the successful progress of the gigantic rebel movement, our mandarin listened with great attention. He did not altogether trust to the accuracy of the intelligence, but the information picked up on his journey was in the main of similar purport, and favourable to the Taiping cause. From all this he concluded that the movement was reaching its crisis, and it was quite possible that it might succeed in overthrowing the Manchoo dynasty. With these impressions on his mind he spoke on

the subject in a more confidential manner than he had yet done.

"This news," he said, "corroborates what I have already heard, and the imperialist generals are in great consternation at the victorious advance of your army on the wealthy seaport towns. Under these circumstances I will make no delay to reach Nanking, and place my services at the disposal of your chiefs. Now that I have performed my duty in consigning the remains of my lamented mother to the tomb, I am free to take action in the matter. Say, Cut-sing, how would you advise me to proceed, for in this part of my journey you must be my guide."

"Honourable sir, you gladden my heart, and may depend upon my assistance in proceeding with safety to the southern capital. You need not make a day's delay, for I have a boat in readiness to convey us comfortably thither, with a retired cabin for the accommodation of your daughter and a female attendant."

A slight frown stole over Meng-kee's features at this assumption of Cut-sing's that A-Lee would accompany him. "I have no intention," he replied, "of taking A-Lee into a besieged city, where dangers of many kinds may encompass a maiden."

"You need have no fear in that respect, noble sir, for there are many fair women among the Taipings, who would welcome her and protect her from harm in their homes. This you may inform her, that the Chung-wang, our great commander of the forces, has a daughter of about her own age, who will receive her as a sister."

"Before I decide on this I must consult her, and will mention what you have stated; meanwhile we must part, you to make preparations for our journey, while I make

arrangements to bid adieu to my kindred. The result I shall let you know to-morrow, when we meet in this place at the same hour."

On Meng-kee's return to the family mansion, he lost no time in having an interview with his daughter. He informed her of all that the emissary had said concerning the success of the Taiping movement, and the likelihood of his obtaining a high post in that service. Then he told her about his resolve to leave for Nanking in a day or two, while she would remain with her kindred in Yang-chow.

Here she interrupted him, saying, "Father! dearest father, you must not leave me behind. My fortunes are yours. Besides, do not the Taiping God-worshippers believe in the same tenets of Christianity that we do? And surely there are some good women amongst them with whom I can associate, whose religious observances would accord more with my faith than the heathen rites and ceremonies of this household."

Upon saying this, Loo A-Lee buried her face in her father's breast, and gave vent to sobs and tears.

"Be calm, my child," he whispered; "this point was discussed between Cut-sing and myself; and, strange to say, he had settled it in his own mind that you were to come with me, by stating that he had engaged a comfortable boat, having a private cabin for your special accommodation."

"Then he is not such a disagreeable man as I took him for," she said, lifting up her head and looking at her father through her tears, with a smile upon her face; "he knows that I am an affectionate, dutiful daughter, who would sacrifice her best interests for those of her parent, and share with him all his sorrows and dangers."

"I know that well, my beloved child; but was afraid to

take you among a community while as yet I can only guess at their social condition from hearsay, and that is conflicting. However, he assured me that there were many ladies among the Taipings who would welcome and protect you from harm. So we shall say nothing more about it, and at once prepare to pursue our journey to Nanking."

Excuses were made to their relatives by father and daughter that they intended to visit some friends in the neighbouring town of Kwa-chow at the entrance of the Grand Canal, which were accepted without suspicion. On the following day Meng-kee met Cut-sing according to appointment, when the emissary rejoiced within himself at the prospect of being on familiar terms with A-Lee, and so enabled to try all his blandishments to win her affections.

In due course the party got safely on board the passenger boat, A-Lee having dispensed with the servant hired at Tung-chow, for Cut-sing had engaged a woman favourable to the Taiping cause to attend upon her. As the heats of autumn had passed away by this time, the internal arrangements of the cabins were made comfortable to withstand the winter frosts. In these the Chinese depend entirely for warmth on quilted cotton bed furniture, and long robes, sometimes lined with fur. A-Lee and her attendant occupied the small after-cabin, where she could recline on a cushioned sofa, with a small work-table by her side. Meng-kee and Cut-sing sat in the chief cabin on arm-chairs—these being chiefly used in China—at the sides of a large table, intended for a goodly number of passengers. There they sat smoking their long-stemmed brass pipes, and chatting away in a friendly manner.

On this section of the canal there was more-traffic than

they had hitherto seen. Junks of various sizes were passing to and fro with passengers and produce, chiefly in transit between the depôts at its junction and the upper reaches of the river. Greater speed than usual was also maintained by the boatmen in taking advantage of the temporary absence of the legitimate authorities, placed there in ordinary times to check smuggling in contraband articles, among which were firearms and munitions of war. A practical eye could see that some of the vessels were of foreign build, or as they are termed *lorchas*, with the unmistakable presence of foreigners in command, who carried on a lucrative traffic with the Taipings. By nightfall our travellers arrived at Kwa-chow.



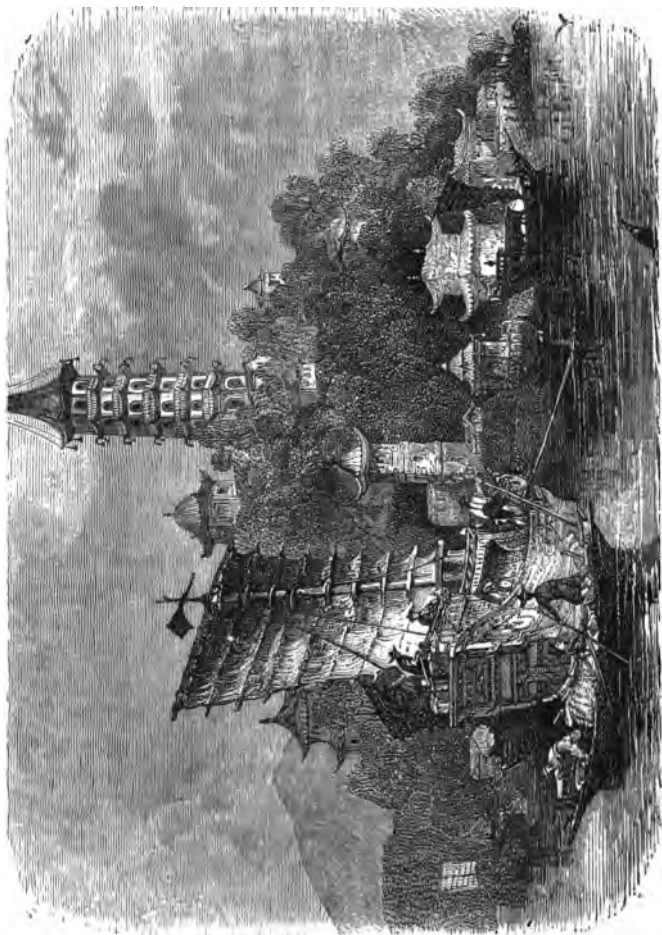


CHAPTER XXIV.

Sailing up the Yang-tsze Kiang.—Meng-kee contemplates the grandeur of the river.—He also laments the destruction of Chin-kiang by the Taipings.—Cut-sing avers it was done by the Imperialists.—A British man-of-war steams down the river.—The emissary says if they could but enlist foreigners in their cause, their success would be complete.—Desolation of the farms on the river banks.—Country returning to a state of nature.—Within Taiping Territory.—Recruits dress in rebel costume.—Junk attacked by foreign rowdies, who turn out to be friends of the rebels.

EARLY in the morning the mandarin and the emissary were astir, and went on shore to purchase some necessaries and comforts for the voyage. The scenery at this reach of the Yang-tsze Kiang is of much interest and beauty, rarely surpassed by river scenes in any part of the world. Meng-kee was a man who appreciated the beauties of nature, and made for a neighbouring elevation of the ground to survey the country. Moreover, the associations of his youth were connected with its features where he had rambled over hill and dale, by stream and lake, with his college companions during the days of relaxation from study. Many years had passed away since he had seen the spot, and he was naturally anxious to see if any change had taken place in its aspect during the contentions of the Taipings and Imperialists.

There he beheld unchanged the broad flood of the



GOLDEN ISLAND, ON THE YANG-TSZE RIVER.

great "Son of the Ocean," rolling along majestically to the sea, with its deep volume of water more than a mile in width. Looking down the river, he saw the picturesque form of Silver Island, with its quaint temples embowered in autumnal foliage, their white walls gleaming in the rays of the morning sun, and the island itself cleaving the waters near the mid-channel, so as to form an eddying torrent on each side, the dread of all navigators. On the other hand, looking up the stream he saw Golden Island, celebrated for its pictorial charms, the peculiar sanctity of its temples and pagoda, erected in ancient times by the disciples of Kong-foo-tzse (Confucius), Lao-kien, and Fo. These islands appeared much the same as he had often seen them before, and so did the swelling hills on the opposite bank of the river. But alas! the flourishing city of Chin-Kiang, which had formerly covered the site with more than fifty thousand houses, shops, and public buildings was in ruins! Now the slopes of the hills were strewn with the *débris* of that once populous and wealthy emporium of commerce, and only a few wretched-looking inhabitants could be seen in the suburb.

"There is another example of devastation," the mandarin remarked to his companion. "Is that the work of your chiefs, who wish to turn the country into a Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace. To me it looks more like as if they were making a *Hellish Kingdom of Great Misery*."

"You are unjust, honourable sir!" was the emissary's rejoinder. "The destruction you see was chiefly done by the 'imps' who attacked the city on all sides by land and water, throwing in fire-balls which set fire to the buildings, and slaying every one, friend or foe, who endeavoured to escape from the conflagration."

Meng-kee doubted the accuracy of this statement, as he had heard that when the town was first taken by the insurgents they set fire to the temples and images, which spread among the houses, and rendered a great number of the people destitute. However, he thought it best to say no more about it, and without any further remark led the way into Kwa-chow. After making their purchases they returned to the boat, which was unmoored without delay, and sailed up the Yang-tzse Kiang with a favouring breeze. They had not gone far when they encountered one of the "monster fire junks," as the natives call them—a British man-of-war, with the naval commander-in-chief on board, who was on his return from Nanking, after having a parley with the Taiping chiefs, who engaged not to fire on any vessels passing the city if they hoisted a distinctive foreign flag.

As the noble frigate *Imperieuse* passed down the winding reach every eye was fixed upon her until she passed out of view. Cut-sing was the first to venture upon a remark.

"Ah!" said he, "if we could only get these foreigners to join our cause, with their war-ships, sailors, and soldiers, then should we be able to conquer the Manchoo Emperor and his Tartar forces, and restore the ancient Chinese rule over the Taiping Tien Kwo."

"I agree with you," responded Meng-kee, "and think it strange that the alliance of the idolatrous Manchooks should be preferred by them to that of the iconoclastic Taipings, who profess the same Christian religion as themselves. This anomalous policy is to me a matter of earnest thought, and I shall make it my study to understand it thoroughly, so that in the event of coming into communication with the foreign authorities, I may be able to argue the question on all its points."

"Honourable sir, that is just what I have said to the Kan Wang, my superior in office, when I mentioned that you were going to join us, for your qualifications as a mandarin had taught you wisdom in discussing such matters with foreigners, especially as you were a member of the church at Peking, which teaches their creed. Now if you can use your talents in persuading the foreign chiefs to assist us if they think ours a righteous cause, or if not to remain perfectly neutral, then will you obtain high rank and emoluments in the Tien Wang's Government."

These flattering remarks were congenial to Meng-kee, who was naturally ambitious of high command. Consequently he resolved to turn his knowledge of foreign policy to account in endeavouring to negotiate a treaty of friendship between them and his new masters, that might supersede the one recently concluded with his late administration.

"My abilities are small," he said, with the usual Chinese affected humility, "but in that respect I have turned them to the best account by studying the manners and customs of the foreigners I have met, and making inquiry into their systems of government and commerce. The result in my mind is that those whom we have been taught to consider as 'barbarians' are an enlightened and polite people, at least their chief men are. They are open to reason, and it appears to me that it only requires a little argument between them and a competent envoy for them and the Taiping chiefs to come to a friendly understanding."

A-Lee, who was listening to the conversation, joined in it here, saying, "Father, I think you are right; but do you remember what Ca-me-la said, when you questioned him on the subject, that his countrymen would not countenance

the Taiping chiefs because they were ignorant upstarts, or 'coolie kings,' who were incapable of forming a government?"

"That is false," exclaimed Cut-sing, losing his usual equanimity of temper. "Our chiefs are learned men. The Tien-wang is not only a learned scholar, but he has the power of prophecy, and possesses attributes directly sent from heaven. My master, the Kan Wang, is also a great scholar, and the other wangs (kings) are all men of superior intelligence, bravery, and learning. What the foreign officer said regarding them is false, and he deserves to be punished for having spoken so."

This exhibition of bad temper elicited a rebuke from Meng-kee, which made him see his error in disturbing the harmony of their conversation, so he made most humble apologies to father and daughter. It was evident that he was as much annoyed at the mention of my name by A-Lee as by the remark upon the low origin of the Taiping leaders.

By this time the day was well advanced, and the breeze had freshened. The bamboo sails were well filled, and they sailed rapidly, passing the districts of E-ching and Luh-ho, which had frequently been the scene of Taiping incursions. These formerly flourishing agricultural districts had suffered severely. Most of the farmsteads were deserted, and the fields were covered with rank weeds. Few of the inhabitants were seen, and they were chiefly old men and women, the younger branches of the family having been forced into the service of their new taskmasters under a species of remunerative bondage. Altogether the aspect of the country was desolate, and fast returning to a condition of savage nature. Wild birds and beasts now roamed through the

tangled brushwood, where previous to the Taiping rebellion poultry and domestic animals, nourishing an industrious community, were abundant.

Loo A-Lee having withdrawn into the privacy of her cabin, reclined upon her couch, and lapsed into a meditative mood. Her thoughts wandered back to the happy days she passed at Peking, when her father held the high position of a mandarin, and they both enjoyed the comforts of a luxurious home. Now these had been exchanged for the discomforts of travel, and being obliged to associate with people of low degree, who might bring disaster upon them both. Then she heaved a sigh at the recollection of her interviews with her foreign lover, to whom she had plighted her troth. She conjured up in her imagination his disappointment at the sudden departure of herself and father, without bidding him farewell; and she wondered whether they should ever meet again. From these recollections of the past, her thoughts became alive to the present, and she felt once more an unknown dread at being under the power of the Taiping emissary. Hitherto he had conducted himself in a polite, not to say obsequious manner, but now he had shown that his true nature was that of a violent disposition, hidden under the mask of servility. No doubt this was to suit his own purposes, and she feared that some evil lay in store at his hands.

These rambling meditations were interrupted by the entrance of her attendant with the afternoon meal. This female was middle aged, short in stature, with the ordinary Chinese type of physiognomy, characterized by high cheek bones and oblique eyes. There was nothing prepossessing in her appearance or manner, yet she was most attentive, obliging, and communicative. A-Lee had observed that an

intimacy seemed to exist between her and Foong Cut-sing, that showed as if they had been acquainted for some time. She was not by any means of an inquisitive disposition, yet she considered the present a fitting opportunity to make some inquiries concerning the emissary's antecedents.

"How is it," said the mandarin's daughter addressing her attendant, "Ah-fong, that the gentlemen do not come into the cabin for their evening rice?"

"Their excellencies," she replied, "are eating on deck, so as to see the banks of the great river, while at their meal."

This favoured A-Lee's intention of questioning her about Cut-sing who was out of hearing. Accordingly she led the conversation towards that point, by asking the usual Chinese introductory question, "What is your surname?"

She hesitated, and answered in rather a confused manner, "My poor surname is Ching."

"Where is your native place?"

"My humble place of birth is Kwa-chow, the town we left at the entrance to the Great Canal."

"I believe you are a God-worshipper, and have espoused the Taiping cause."

"Your ladyship has been correctly informed by my master Foong Cut-sing."

"Yes, it was he who told me so! Have you known him long?"

"Aye, for many years; ever since the Taiping Wang captured Nanking, and drove the imps from this part of the country. I travel up and down from that great city, and pick up information for him, and others who risk their lives in obtaining recruits to our ranks. He has told me of his success in gaining your father and you over to the heavenly

cause, and hopes that he will secure high honours for both of you. His devotion to yourself is only inferior to that which he holds towards our sacred Emperor the Tien Wang, and should you consent to be his wife, he will protect you from all danger throughout life, but if not, he will revenge himself on—”

“Hush! hush!” exclaimed A-Lee, as she interrupted her attendant, “the gentlemen are coming into the cabin, and I do not wish them to hear the subject of our conversation.”

The country through which our travellers were now passing was of a mountainous—even of a romantic—character. The hills in the distance rose to a height of many thousand feet, and formed irregular ranges, with valleys in deep shadow, and had their crests glowing in the rays of the setting sun. In the fore-ground the hills were of a more isolated form, appearing like islands on the wide plan through which the waters of the Yang-tsze flowed in a majestic current towards the ocean, which, however, was still two hundred miles distant. Looking up the river, the Taiping emissary pointed out what he said was a pagoda upon the top of a hill which overlooked the city of Nanking. He had scarcely done so when the last beams of the sun dropped below the horizon, and the landscape was quickly merged in the shades of night.

By this time the breeze had become very faint, and soon it dwindled into a calm. As there was no necessity to go farther that night, it was agreed that the junk should be moored along the river bank until daylight, and then proceed on its voyage. While this matter was being arranged, the master of the boat reported that he saw a *Jorcha*, or foreign-built craft, lying at anchor about a mile

ahead; and that it was advisable to keep a short distance astern of the stranger. Accordingly the junk was brought to her moorings.

As the party had now arrived within the territory under Taiping dominion, the emissary said it was necessary to alter their dress, according to that in use among their friends, as distinguished from the Tartar costume. For this purpose the trunks brought from Kwa-chow were opened and their contents distributed.

These were of cotton fabrics for the crew, and silk for the passengers. They were all of bright colours, yellow predominating. The ex-mandarin attired himself in a flowered crimson silk robe that reached to his heels and concealed his ordinary garb underneath. The emissary donned a yellow-flowered silk tunic and loose red trousers. A-Lee wore a flowered lilac satin tunic, with loose trousers of purple silk.

Then came the difficulty of dressing the men's hair after the Taiping fashion. It is well known that the Tartars introduced the style of shaving the forehead and gathering the back hair into a tail. Before this the Chinese wore it naturally, without clipping or shaving, and with them the hair grows lower on the forehead than with any other race; in such abundance, indeed, as to form a hairy turban when twisted round the head. The Taipings considered that the innovation of the Tartar tail was a badge of subjection on their pure descent, so they restored the ancient custom as a symbol of their hatred to the Manchoo rule. Hence they were commonly called *chang-maou*, signifying "long-haired" men. Of course our adventurers could not display a full growth of hair, but they shook the plaits out of their tails, and twisted them round the shaven part of their heads, over

which an orange-coloured piece of silk or calico was worn. This gave them a most picturesque appearance, similar to the old costume of turbaned Turks.

In enforcing this habit upon their adherents the Taiping leaders had a double object in view. It was easily distinguished from the sombre black and blue of their enemies, thereby preventing them running away, when they would be sure to be taken prisoners and decapitated; while by the adoption of yellow, which is the imperial colour of the Manchoo dynasty, they brought the sacred symbol of the emperor into common use.

Having arranged these matters to the satisfaction of Cutting, preparatory to entering the precincts of Taipingdom, both passengers retired to rest.

A-Lee felt somewhat restless, which she attributed to the excitement of the day and the prospects of the morrow. At length she fell into a fitful slumber, from which she was awakened by hearing strange voices close to the side of the cabin where her head lay. At first she imagined that it was only some of the boatmen conversing during their watch on deck. But as she listened, and the voices, spoke in whispers, she became convinced that they uttered a foreign language. Above her head there was a small pane of glass, to which she raised herself up and peeped into the night. It was partial moonlight, which enabled her to see the forms of several men clambering up the side of the junk from a boat alongside. She remained perfectly still and listened.

Then the silence was broken by one voice saying, "I tell you what it is, I know there's a woman aboard, for I seed her through the telescope standing here afore sundown, and she looked to me a reglar stunner."

"Vell, vat you say ish goot," a second voice responded, "but how can we catch her vitout kicking up a bobbyery."

"I guess," said a third voice, "we'd better seize the junk, and take the crew prisoners, letting them off by delivering up the gal. But mind lads no killin or woundin, if ye can help it."

The drowsy boatmen, who had been asleep on watch, were now awakened and gave the alarm. Immediately a volley of shots roused and terrified every one on board. The cowardly crew, seeing that they were attacked by foreigners, escaped from the junk by jumping on shore and hiding themselves among the tall reeds. Meng-kee and Cut-sing resolutely stood at the entrance of the cabin, each with a revolver. They could not make out at first who their assailants were, imagining them to be Imperialists, from a gunboat. If so, they were doomed men, as there was every evidence on board that they were adherents of the rebels, and on their way to the head-quarters at Nanking. Presently, after discharging their volley, the boarders rushed towards the cabin. The band, consisting of six foreigners, was headed by a tall lanky fellow, whose language indicated his nationality.

"Hold hard," he said, "with them ere five-shooters, you tarnation Chinese. Ef you are gwine to fight, why here we air, three to one, and no flies. Now we don't want to hurt you, if you'll only let us take the pretty gal you have aboard."

"You be blowed," said his mate, whose nationality was easily recognizable in the doggrell English he spoke, "your Chinese don't understand that lingo. Now lookee here," addressing our adventurers, "this piecee men no wantchee makee kill Cheneeman, only wantchee that numpa one wifeco hab got topside."

To the amazement of Meng-kee, the invading captain no sooner saw Cut-sing than he broke into a loud laugh, and addressed him in the foreign doggrel: "My savee you massa Jack, and Long Tom, two velly good man, all same blong Taiping pidgin. You savee my name, Cut-sing, long time hab pay you plenty dolla for powda, cap, gun. Spose you now go Nanking, my go, my flind go, he chilo go, all same. What for you make plenty bobbery? All same flind blong you, you sabee."

Upon this sally and explanation, Jack gave a long whistle, which Tom prolonged, and held his hand out to the Taiping emissary, ejaculating, "Well, this is a pretty go; here we've been agoing to fight our friends! Give us a shake of your flipper, my hearty, and say no more about it."

Cut-sing accepted the invitation which followed to go on board, as he knew his men well; but he excused Meng-kee from accompanying him as he had to see and bring the frightened boatmen back. When he got on board the vessel he was delighted to see the cargo the Yankee skipper had mentioned. In explanation, it must be stated that these men were smugglers of articles contraband of war prohibited by the foreign Maritimes Customs. They were renegades of all nations—English, American, German, Portuguese, and French—who thought it no crime to sell weapons and ammunition to the Taipings. On the contrary, many of them excused the trade on the plea of propagating Christianity by the overthrow of the Imperialists, while at the same time they found it a lucrative trade. Not only did common sailors and others carry on the illegal traffic, but merchants at the treaty ports, calling themselves upright traders, found the ships and merchandise to carry it on.



CHAPTER XXV.

Nanking, the capital of Taipingdom.—Great area of the city within the walls.—Desolate aspect.—Ruins of the famous Porcelain Tower.—The Taiping Wang and the Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace.—Procession of Worshippers.—Discourse on Taipingism.—The party proceeds to the Tien Wang's Palace.—Introduction to the Kan Wang.—He invites them to his Palace.

BEFORE the rays of the rising sun had tipped the distant mountain peaks, the junk slipped her moorings and sailed up the river under the influence of the morning breeze from the sea. The junkmen were anxious to get away from the *lorcha* and her rowdy crew of foreigners, so they silently sculled the junk across the river as soon as they returned on board, and were well on their course by daylight.

When Cut-sing came back from inspecting the cargo of the *lorcha*, he explained the whole matter to Meng-kee, who thanked him for getting rid of such unruly visitors and settling so amicably a disturbance that at first threatened to be serious. A-Lee also joined her father in thanking the Taiping emissary, so that harmony was once more restored, and the slight jar of the previous day forgiven, if not forgotten.

The sun was well up in the bright, bracing air, when the party came in sight of Nanking, the famous "South Court"

of the ancient dynasties, which at one time far excelled its rival Peking, or "North Court;" but now its grandeur has departed. Viewed from the river, its decay is not visible except here and there where breaches have been made in the massive walls that encompass the city during the assaults they have resisted. These walls can be traced by the eye over hill and plain in a triangular circuit of twenty-two miles, indicating the vast area comprised within its boundary. However, it must be understood that this immense space is not nor ever was covered with habitations and their ordinary amenities. In all Chinese cities a large tract of land is used for agricultural purposes for growing food in times of siege, and Nanking is no exception to the rule.

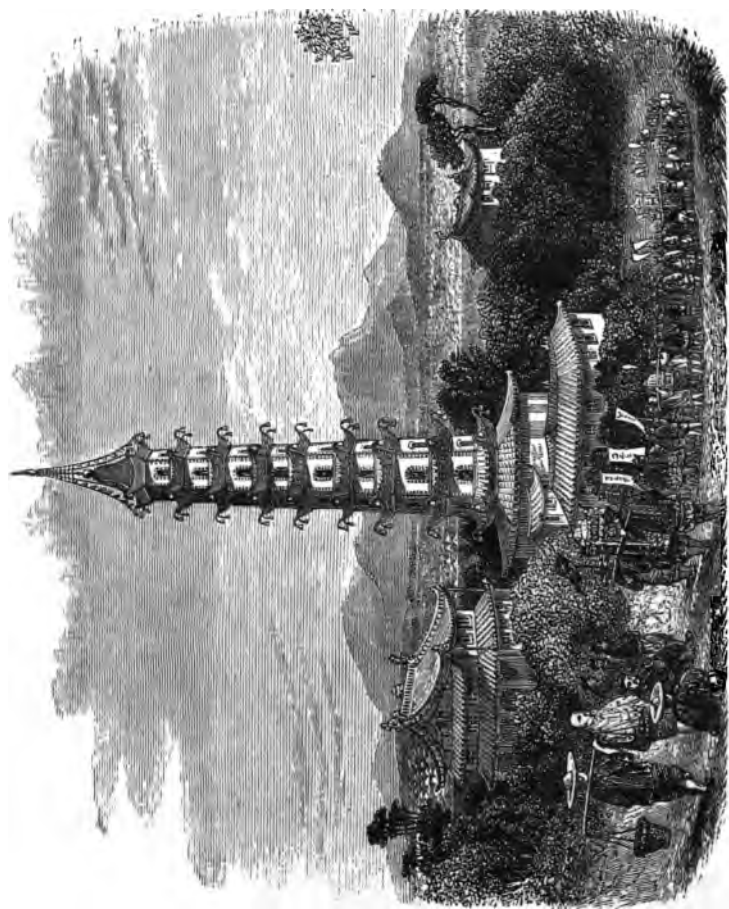
This ancient southern capital of the most populous empire on earth not only exceeds the northern modern metropolis in extent, but its natural situation is vastly superior in picturesqueness, and its central position in relation to the eighteen provinces—each in itself equal to a European kingdom of the first rank. Looking across the wide-flowing Yang-tsze, the spectator beholds its crenellated wall frowning along the southern bank, like a gigantic fortress, greater than any on the banks of the Rhine; while within these battlements rises a fortified hill higher than that of Ehrenbreitstein. And as the rock on which that fortress is built is the termination of a mountain chain that trends far beyond, so in the background of Nanking, mountains rise one above another of greater magnitude. In fine, both city and site, river and range, are upon a gigantic scale, unrivalled in Europe.

These natural and artificial features of the city and its surroundings impressed Meng-kee and his daughter favour-

ably towards the capital of the so-called "Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace." Alas! these favourable impressions were doomed to be disappointed when they beheld the devastation and ruin within its walls.

Their junk was steered up a creek leading to the Water Gate. Here their baggage was landed, and a conveyance hired to take them into the city. As they moved along a well-paved road through the fields, there was not much to be seen; but presently they came upon what was formerly called the "Tartar City," where not a brick or stone of its numerous buildings was left standing, with the exception of the Central Drum Tower, which is built on an eminence commanding an extensive prospect of the city. Passing this, they came to the inhabited portion adjoining the South Gate, outside of which once stood the famous Porcelain Tower. This was considered one of the "Seven Wonders of the World" in olden times. Meng-kee recollected having seen it when young, as its graceful proportions rose to a height of more than three hundred feet, divided into nine segments or stories, each with a projecting roof covered with glazed green, blue, and yellow tiles, while from the eaves depended a hundred and fifty bells hung on chains, which tinkled in harmonious cadence as they swung to and fro in the wind. Although the inner bricks of the edifice were of ordinary manufacture, those which formed the basement and outer walls were of white porcelain, which gave the proportions of the tower a light and graceful form. It was erected by an emperor of the Ming dynasty to commemorate the goodness of the Empress Kao, his ancestor, and cost nearly a million sterling.

When Meng-kee went to look for this "Temple of Gratitude"—as the Nankingese fondly used to call it—the



THE PORCELAIN TOWER, NANKING, AS IT WAS,

towering monument was gone. Two immense walls, divided by a narrow aperture, were the only portions left standing; all the rest was a mass of white ruins. This destruction of the finest example of his national architecture he ascertained was the work of the Taipings, and it produced on him a most depressing effect, especially as he had committed himself to the cause. In his mind this seemed to be the culminating point of their destructive tendencies, without his having yet seen the smallest advance on their part towards substituting new edifices; and when he did see them there was as much difference between their structure and those destroyed as between those of ancient and modern Rome.

At the South Gate there was a large crowd assembled, many of whom were reading the following proclamation of the Tien Wang, posted on the gate:—"The Heavenly Father, Christ, Myself, and my Son are Lords for ever. The Heavenly Kingdom is established everywhere, and the effulgence of the Father, Brother, Myself, and the Young Lord is spread upon the earth for a myriad myriad autumns." Then came a notification announcing that, "On the 9th of the 9th moon the Elder Brother descended upon earth and took upon himself the weighty responsibility of destroying the imps and exterminating the demons." This being the day in question, a great demonstration was about to take place. As it would show their loyalty to the Tien Wang, the emissary advised Meng-kee to stop and witness it, which he thought judicious himself, as it would give him an insight into the ceremonies of his new compatriots.

He observed that a platform had been erected for those who were to take a leading part in the proceedings, around which the people gathered in great numbers. A cordon of

soldiery kept the crowd within bounds by discharging fire-arms and the inevitable cracker on such occasions. Suddenly there shot up all round a number of gaudy banners, with the Tien Wang's attributes inscribed upon them. This was immediately followed by the harsh sound of a band playing on execrable instruments, and banging upon gongs. Turning in the direction of this noise, Meng-kee saw a procession headed by a gaudily-dressed personage and his retinue riding on ponies. Room being made for them through the crowd, they dismounted and ascended the platform. The chief person was commandant of the city, who had undertaken to deliver a discourse to the people. His head was adorned with a crown of gilded brown paper, and his dress was of a blue material, decorated with dragons and other animals.

After a salvo of three guns the commandant addressed the multitude, and in a loud voice told them to kneel. Upon this they all fell on their knees, when he murmured what was deemed a prayer. Another salvo was given, and all the people stood up, while he discoursed to them upon the blessings of Taipingism, and the obligations of its members. He said, "It is quite impossible for the Manchoo Emperor to destroy the Heavenly dynasty as long as the people continue loyal subjects of the Heavenly King. He has commanded us to slay all false worshippers, therefore let us move onward and exert our courage to the utmost to fulfil his commands. Those who are true believers shall lack neither food nor clothing, and ere the lapse of a hundred years we shall all go to Heaven." The proceedings terminated with a general salute all round, and the procession returned as they came.

Meng-kee thought that these were strange doctrines to

inculcate, and the mode of doing so no less strange. However, he made no comment upon the ceremony to Cut-sing; he thought it best to observe and listen, and keep his remarks to himself. He had now ventured too far to incur suspicion of disloyalty to the cause, which might bring disaster upon himself and his daughter. On her part she seemed to be more amused than edified by the demonstration and discourse, which appeared a mockery of the Christian religion.

Cut-sing now gave orders to the driver to proceed in the direction of the Tien Wang's palace. When they reached that quarter they saw opposite each gate a high wall to screen the interior from the public gaze. However, the emissary being known to the janitors, the party had a look at the palace of the Taiping chief. It was of great size, enclosed in a yellow wall forty feet high, and very thick. Within they saw yellow and green roofs, and a couple of minarets. Passing through the gateway, they approached the grand door of the palace by a covered way supported by gilded columns; dragons of all sizes were carved upon the roof; and on the door, which was as gaudy as paint and gold could make it, was an inscription, "The sacred heavenly door." On either side were two gigantic drums; and in the inner chambers, gilded lanterns, suspended on silken cords, and ornamented with rich tassels, were hung about in every direction.

A short distance from the Tien Wang's palace was that of the Kan Wang, in whose service Cut-sing acted a prominent part, and to whom he looked for a favourable reception of Meng-kee and his daughter. On arriving there they saw that it was redolent of red paint and gilding. They were ushered into the presence of the great Taiping

Minister, who was seated in a gilded chair, dressed in full robes, with attendants finely dressed standing by his side. He was a man of middle age, rather stout, and had an open and very pleasing countenance. He rose up on their entrance, and received them with great politeness, and pointing to where they should be seated—

“You have been long absent, Cut-sing,” said he, addressing the emissary; “but I have heard of you from some new recruits, and also of your success in securing the adhesion of Loo Meng-kee and his daughter to our cause, whom I have no doubt I now see before me. Welcome to the capital of Taiping Tien Kwo,” he added, turning to them, “and to my home, where everything is at your disposal.”

The ex-mandarin thanked him in proper terms on behalf of himself and A-Lee, but excused himself from further conversation until they had recruited themselves. Accordingly, the attendants were ordered to take them to the inner apartments, while Cut-sing remained to give an account of his mission.





CHAPTER XXVI.

The Heavenly Kingdom of Great Peace.—How it originated as the Society of God Worshippers.—They defeat the Imperial troops.—Religious tenets based on Christianity, but of a blasphemous nature.—They overrun the country.—Meng-kee well received.—The Kan Wang, a man of extensive knowledge for a Chinaman.

MY tale has now entered upon a new act in the great drama of Chinese warfare, where the foreign foes of the legitimate sovereign became friends and allies in suppressing the most gigantic rebellion that history has ever recorded. It is no part of my task to discuss the origin or to describe the progress of that movement, but it is necessary for the comprehension of my narrative to allude briefly to its leading events—especially for the information of those who have no recollection of its commencement, and the extraordinary interest it created at the time throughout every Christian nation.

It is now twenty-five years since a religious sect arose in the south of China, near Canton, under the denomination of "God-worshippers," whose tenets were based upon the leading doctrines of Christianity. The leader of the sect was a poor unsuccessful scholar named Hoong Seu-tsuen, who had imbibed his views from reading religious tracts in the Chinese language, issued by Protestant missionaries.

He was a man of a fanatical disposition, and in his enthusiasm for the new doctrines that dawned upon his mind, he mingled political views of a revolutionary character to overthrow the reigning Manchoo Tartar dynasty, and restore in his person one purely Chinese. This politico-religious movement found acceptance among the many discontented people that always exist in China, where rebellion is the rule in one or other of its provinces.

At the outset, it comprised a small resolute band of men, who came into collision with a party of Imperial troops, whom they defeated. They marched northwards in their career, increasing in strength until they became a mighty host, numbering millions in their ranks, devastating the fairest provinces and capturing some of the greatest cities. For twelve years they traversed the country from south to north through twelve hundred miles of latitude, and from west to east over six hundred miles of longitude, creating an internecine strife over an area approximating to seven hundred and twenty thousand square miles, equal to six times the superficies of the entire United Kingdom. Like a vast flight of locusts devouring every green thing in their way, "leaving not a wrack behind," this revolutionary horde swept over the land, consuming the food of the industrious inhabitants, burning and sacking cities, towns, and villages, and strewing their path with victims until more than ten millions of human beings were either killed in fight or died from famine, disease, and massacre. Yet the leaders of the movement impiously promulgated their dogmas as sanctioned by the Almighty for the establishment of a "Peaceful Heavenly Kingdom," based upon Christianity.

When the first accounts of the movement reached Europe, most people thought they saw in it the hand of Divine

Providence for the regeneration of the Chinese through the dissemination of the Gospel. But these hopes gradually faded away as the movement progressed in its hideous career, subversive of all the laws of God and man. As the monster horde increased in power and success, its leader from time to time abandoned the quasi-Christian views he had started with, until he assumed the attributes of divinity, and styled himself the "Heavenly King," who had ascended into heaven and held converse with the Deity. In one of his blasphemous proclamations he announces it thus: "The time that We ascended into Heaven various musical instruments attended Us; the thunder also came to Our presence, and was, as it were, of the form of a male fowl. Heavenly officers and troops supported Us into a carriage and through the northern region by this great road carried us up to Heaven. On each side of the heavenly portal were beautiful women without number to receive Us. We then conversed with the Heavenly Father, and the Elder Brother Christ. It was about the space of two days We remained there, and then came down. The Father's Sacred Will says:—Tien Wang is the chief to save the good people, the proof of which is shown by Our coming down upon the earth at the present time to become the Chief. Respect this!"

This tirade of nonsense had its delusive effects upon the lawless multitude. From this impious assertion that he held communication with the heavenly host it is evident that Hoong Seu-tsuen was conversant with the Koran, and had taken a leaf out of Mahomet's book to mingle with his garbled quotations from the Scriptures. Be that as it may, there is abundant reason in all his writings, sayings, and doings to pronounce him one of the most blasphemous impostors the world has ever seen.

At the time the mandarin and his daughter took up their abode in the stronghold of the Taipings, this man and his myrmidons held sway over a territory which in ordinary times contained a population of seventy millions of inhabitants. They had captured and held every city and town of any importance in the provinces of Che-kiang and Kiang-soo, with the exception of Shanghai. Besides Nanking, they held the important cities of Foochow and Hang-chow, from which they formed bases of military operations to surround the devoted city and foreign settlement. One by one the walled towns and large villages in the immediate vicinity fell into their hands. A force of more than two hundred thousand armed men had driven in the Imperialist troops at every point, and only a few hundred foreign soldiers, with several men-of-war, were left to defend Shanghai.

All this and more was communicated to Meng-kee by the Kan Wang while entertaining his guest and Cut-sing at dinner in his own private apartment. This was quite a museum in its way. The principal article of furniture was a large bed of Soochow manufacture, covered with jade and other ornaments, and hung with yellow curtains. Tables lined the sides of the chamber and supported a most extraordinary conglomeration of different articles. There was a telescope on a moving pedestal, a gun-box, three Colt's revolvers, a box of percussion-caps, one of matches, two solar lamps, a cake of soap, a book on military tactics, and the Holy Bible; any amount of Chinese books, comprising all those valuable works published by foreign missionaries; quires of yellow paper, five or six timepieces, an alarum, a broken barometer, gold pencils, and dirty rags. These on one side. On the other tables were piles of foreign

books, a hat-box with the dragon hat inside, fans mounted in silver, jade-stone drinking-cups and saucers, gold and silver cups, platters, chopsticks and forks, three English port wine bottles, and one of mixed pickles. At various places were suspended an English naval sword, some dragon caps, a couple of Japanese daggers, two French engravings, and an English one. They sat at dinner on chairs with marble seats at a marble table.

Meng-kee could see, from the number of foreign articles scattered about, that his host was friendly to foreigners. This was further exemplified by one of the attendants bringing in a bottle of sherry with wine-glasses.

"Your highness," he remarked, as a glass was filled and set before him, "I understood that wine was forbidden by the Tien Wang?"

"Yes, it is, your excellency," Kan Wang replied, "but in my case the prohibition has been rescinded. I applied for a dispensation, on the plea that unless I drank wine I could not eat; so it was immediately granted."

There was a sly twinkle in his eye as he said this; and as he gulped down two or three glassfuls it loosened his tongue, and he became quite confidential on Taiping state affairs.

"Now that you are one of ourselves," he continued, after ordering the attendants out of his sanctum, "I wish to put you in possession of our relations to the Tien Wang, and the conduct of our Government. He is the chief up to whom all look with reverence in developing the new, or rather revived era in Chinese history, which has for its object the overthrow of the Tartar power. But while his feet are on the earth his head is in the skies, and we, the chiefs, who practically carry out the great scheme before us, act more or less independently. My colleagues, who are in

the field in fighting against the 'imps,' never consult us in Nanking, but carry on the war on their own responsibility. For myself, I hate war, and have tried to make it as little terrible as possible. But it is impossible to deny that it is one of extermination; quarter or mercy is never shown to our men by the emperor's soldiers, and in revenge our troops never give any. But the men under my command never unnecessarily slay country people."

"What your highness states is highly creditable, but I am sorely grieved at seeing the devastation and misery caused by this war. You tell me that there is every prospect of your success if you could enlist the foreign forces on our side; now, it has been my chief object in joining the cause to act as a medium between the authorities at Shanghai and the English commander-in-chief to negotiate terms that would be satisfactory to both, as believers in the great doctrines of Christianity."

Upon this the Kang Wang rose and grasped the hand of Meng-kee, saying, "Your excellency has just interpreted my mind. Our faithful emissary Cut-sing has informed me of all your views on the question, and I agree with him, that you are just the envoy to join the staff of Chung Wang, our generalissimo, and proceed to Shanghai to lay before the foreigners our position, and negotiate friendly if not active relations with them. I know their power in war, for I have seen the wonderful effects of their guns and ships at the capture of Canton. If we could only make allies of them," he repeated with enthusiasm, "we could conquer the whole forces of the Tartar Government, drive them from power, and restore a pure Chinese dynasty, that would revive the old grandeur of the Ming emperors, who ruled in this city before a Manchoo had crossed the frontiers at the Great Wall."

The Kan Wang showed an intimate knowledge of foreign matters. He was perfectly acquainted with our systems of geography, had a moderate insight into our mechanical inventions, produced books of reference on these and cognate subjects, and altogether displayed a generous disposition towards the so-called "barbarians" that pleased Meng-kee most favourably in estimating his character. And it is only justice to say that this man was superior to his fellow-Taipings in all respects, and if they had possessed a similarity of character, as a firm believer in the Christian religion, China would in all probability have been under their control.





CHAPTER XXVII.

Loo A-Lee well cared for by the Taiping ladies.—Their marriage laws strict.—Improved condition of females.—Marriage ceremony.—Meng-kee appointed as an envoy to the British authorities at Shanghai.—He is taken to an audience of the Tien Wang.—He bids farewell to his daughter, absorbed in grief.

WHILE her father was being hospitably entertained by the Kan Wang, the ladies of his household were no less assiduous in their attentions to A-Lee. And here it is only just to remark, that the condition of womankind in China under Taiping rule was much superior to that under the ancient laws. It is true that polygamy was still practised by the upper ranks, who had the means to maintain a plurality of wives, but the lower classes were only allowed to have one wife. The marriage laws were very stringent, and while they protected the female sex in its rights, yet it was enacted that every woman must either be married, the member of a family, or an inmate of one of the large institutions for unprotected females, existing in most of the principal cities, and superintended by properly appointed officials. No single woman was allowed amongst them otherwise, and prostitution was punishable with death. Altogether, the status and moral condition of the Taiping women compared favourably with those of their sisters in other parts of China.

When A-Lee entered the female apartments she was received most affectionately by all the ladies. They were delighted with her handsome face and figure, and especially with her feet, from not being cramped or deformed. This horrible practice was abolished from their social customs by decree. But amongst the elderly women, many with unnatural feet were seen; it was only the girls who had been born since the advent of the Tien Wang who enjoyed the freedom of unfettered toes.

Another reform in the social life of Taiping females was the abolition of slavery, and the severest punishments were inflicted on persons buying or selling young girls. Orphans were sent to the institutions for unprotected females, which were managed by responsible matrons. These institutions were organised and designed to educate and protect young girls who had lost their natural guardians, or those married women whose husbands were absent on public service, and who had no relatives to protect and support them.

In like manner, marriage was solemnized among the Taipings with remarkable strictness, and the ceremony was performed by officiating priests appointed on purpose. All the old superstitious rites were discarded; and, except the absence of the wedding-ring, it was very much after the form of the Church of England ceremony. However, they built no separate edifices as churches; marriages and religious worship were conducted within what was called the "Heavenly Hall," a spacious apartment in the official dwellings.

There was one in the Kān Wang's palace where our heroine witnessed the wedding ceremony. When the bridal party arrived, the officiating Minister put the bride and bridegroom through a severe course of examination as to

their theological tenets in conformity with those promulgated by the Tien Wang. The answers being satisfactory, the Minister joined their hands together, and each having accepted the other he pronounced a benediction. The only remnant of the old rites was the bridegroom's procession with music, sedan chairs, and a cavalcade of friends to accompany his spouse home. But the barbarous customs of purchase-money being exchanged between the parents, and the exclusion of the betrothed from each other's society until the wedding day were abandoned. There was no restraint in young people meeting and conversing together, consequently most of these marriages were purely love matches. Even in cases where a chief's daughter was wooed compulsion was never used, and the affianced were given every opportunity to become acquainted with each other.

On another occasion A-Lee witnessed the sacrament of baptism administered to several adults, who had to undergo a strict and lengthened examination, and prove themselves duly qualified before being admitted to the fellowship of the Taipings. The prayers and declarations required for these ceremonies were drawn up under the supervision of the Kan Wang, who might have been designated the Minister of public worship. He had one son, a handsome interesting boy, whom he had educated carefully in the tenets of the Christian religion. Every morning when he entered the family apartment he would go up to a small board hung upon a pillar, and read aloud a translation of the Lord's Prayer inscribed thereon.

Then other religious customs impressed Meng-kee and his daughter most favourably, particularly their strict observance of the Sabbath. They found, however, that it was kept on the seventh day of the week, according to the

ancient Jewish creed. Moreover, public worship began at midnight on Friday, so that the Sabbath morn was ushered in with prayer. During the day two services were held, one towards noon, and the other in the evening. At these meetings prayers were read, also portions of the Bible, and hymns were sung, accompanied by musical instruments, the whole concluding with burning of incense and fire-crackers.

In the city the Sabbath was kept strictly as a day of rest and worship. All the shops were closed, and work was



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generally suspended. Between the services the chiefs met together, to discourse upon religious subjects. The Tien Wang was *pontifex maximus*, and the people with one accord sang his praises, saying, "May the king live ten thousand years, ten thousand times ten thousand years."

In these observances Meng-kee saw the Taipings in their most favourable aspect, and had the leaders kept their inordinate ambition and pride within bounds, it is just

possible that they might have succeeded in establishing a rule based upon foreign Christian institutions. But the very fact of the extent of their material conquests being so much greater than the most sanguine chief had anticipated had fairly turned their brains. Thus when Hoong Seu-tsuen called upon his countrymen to rally round the standard of rebellion, to which in time they had flocked in such vast numbers, he gradually engrafted on the sapling of Christianity, which he originally professed, new branches of faith, involving the belief, not merely in his own divinity, but that of a disreputable son, as follows: "We proclaim for the information of our kindred, all the ministers, and the people, that the Father is the supreme Lord, the Brother is the Saviour of the World; we are the True Lord, and our Son the True Young Lord."

The ex-mandarin having become initiated into the secrets and policy of the Taiping administration, the time had now arrived for him to take his departure from Nanking, and join the Chung Wang, or commander-in-chief, in his progress towards Shanghai.

"When you obtain a private interview with him," said the Kan Wang, "be sure to impress upon him the importance of treating with the English authorities at that place in a conciliatory manner."

"That I shall most certainly do," was Meng-kee's emphatic reply, "for it accords entirely with my own convictions, that if we do not make them our friends, they will most likely become our deadly foes."

"Just so. Therefore it is necessary for him to appeal to their friendship in his decrees through the bond of religion. Let him not only address the authorities but pacify the merchants at Shanghai, assuring them that our cause is

most righteous and sincere. Should his army, therefore, arrive in their vicinity, let the foreigners and Taipings act in a friendly manner towards each other, that every one may quietly attend to his own business, without entertaining any fears, seeing that the systems of religion they professed were the same."

Before proceeding on his mission it was deemed politic that Meng-kee should have an audience of the Tien Wang. Accordingly, he went in company with Kang Wang and his retinue, in gaudy state sedan-chairs and habiliments, to the palace. On the way several of the other chiefs who were in the city fell in ahead of them with similar retinues, each accompanied by a discordant band of musicians. They entered the spacious edifice, and were ushered into a reception-room, where they were presented to the other dignitaries, among whom were two brothers, two nephews, and a son-in-law of the Tien Wang. They were then seated at the entrance of a deep recess, over which was written "Illustrious Heavenly Door." In the interior was a gilded throne, which was vacant. The company waited for some time, as it remained unoccupied, but nevertheless they entered and performed the audience ceremonies as follows. First, they kneeled with their faces to the Tien Wang's seat, and uttered a prayer to the Heavenly Brother; then kneeling with their faces in the opposite direction, they prayed to the Heavenly Father, after which they again kneeled with their faces to the empty seat, and in like manner repeated a prayer to him. They then concluded by singing in a standing position, and left the palace.

This insight into the Taiping state ceremonies demonstrated to the ex-mandarin that they were nothing more than a paltry imitation of the rites and ceremonies with

which he was so well acquainted at the Court of Peking. In comparison they appeared like the flimsy performances in a theatre, and he could not help feeling that there was an air of sham dignity about the whole affair.

His last arrangements were to provide for the safe custody of his daughter during his absence, "But dearest father you must not leave me behind," she exclaimed with impassioned remonstrance. "I have thus far encountered the dangers of travel with you and have no fear to do so again."

"But my child," he said in soothing yet firm language, "it cannot be. I am now bound for the seat of war, where sanguinary dangers may be encountered at every step; and even in our own camps you would be exposed to the insults of a rude soldiery. Better to remain here under the protection of our host, in whose sincerity I place great reliance. Moreover, from what I have seen, and what you must have witnessed yourself, these Taipings have more regard for the honour of the female sex than the Imperialists. If I have my doubts as to the religious and political advantages of the movement I have none as to those of their social condition, where woman is recognized in her proper sphere as the companion of man; while the education and development of her mind is equally well attended to; her duty to God is diligently taught, and in divine worship she takes her proper place. Let us say no more, my daughter, about the matter, but come with me to the Kan Wang, and I will hand you over to his care and protection."

Upon saying this he led her by the hand into the private chamber of their host, where he and Cut-sing purposely awaited their coming.

"Your excellency," he said, with a kindly expression of countenance, as he took the hand of A-Lee, "this jewel of

your family I shall protect as I would my own child, and, under the providence of Heaven, I hope to return her to you as bright and unsullied as she now is."

"And I," Cut-sing, interrupting, said, "will watch over this fair flower of your excellency's garden with earnest devotion and attendance, so that not one rude breath of wind shall blight its leaves."

"Thanks to both of you for these kind assurances, and their recollection will make me feel perfectly at ease in carrying out the objects of my mission, which I hope will meet with success."

After bidding his daughter an affectionate farewell, Meng-kee mounted his horse and galloped out of Nanking with a goodly escort of Taiping troopers.





CHAPTER XXVIII.

Perilous position of Shanghai.—A severe winter.—The Taiping hofdes advance on Shanghai.—An armed host one hundred and twenty thousand strong.—A Committee of public safety formed.—The rebels approach the settlement.—A severe snowstorm checks their progress.—Arrival of British and Indian troops.—The peaceable inhabitants petition the authorities.—The Chinese authorities open the temples as barracks.—Strange mess-tables among the Chinese idols.

WINTER set in with unusual rigour in North China during this eventful year. The foreign and native inhabitants of Shanghai city and settlement hoped that its severity would hinder the advance of the rebels, and accordingly little or no preparation was made to defend the port. At that time it was calculated that the value of merchandise and bullion in the foreign hong and banks was not less than five millions sterling, and that belonging to native merchants and bankers upwards of two millions sterling. Added to these were other descriptions of property afloat in the harbour, such as opium, that swelled the amount to at least ten millions, that might be plundered by a successful enemy.

Knowledge of this was conveyed to the Taipings by their spies, who had free ingress and egress to and from the city. This spurred them on to prosecute the winter campaign with

vigour. Emboldened by their previous success, they swept down upon the devoted settlement, "like the wolf on the fold," from every point of the compass. While the inhabitants supposed themselves living in comparative security, they were suddenly startled by the reports of the fugitives from the country, that the dreaded *Chang-maou* were rapidly approaching. These accounts were verified by distant clouds of smoke by day and fires by night, which were visible on the horizon from the high buildings in Shanghai. Reconnoitring parties were sent out to ascertain the extent of danger which threatened the place. On their return, the authorities were informed that the accounts of the affrighted inhabitants were in no way exaggerated. The neighbouring towns and villages were devastated by fire and sword, and stockades erected in all directions, with an advancing force of 120,000 armed men.

This alarming aspect of affairs roused the foreign community from their lethargy. A meeting was convened of military, naval, and consular officials, together with the most influential civilians, at which a Committee of Public Safety was formed, to find means for constructing defensive works under the superintendence of the military. On looking round the settlement, they saw, with increased feelings of alarm for the safety of life and property from attack, that it was vulnerable at almost every approach. The available defensive force comprised about 2,000 infantry, one-half French, the other Indian troops and volunteers; and about 300 marines and sailors, from the British squadron, under Admiral Hope, besides a half battery of artillery. That gallant officer took the command of this small force, to contend against the overwhelming Taiping hordes until reinforcements could be brought from Tien-tsin and Hong Kong.

From day to day he reconnoitred the country in all directions, and came upon the most direful scenes of terrorism, bloodshed, and anarchy. It was evident that the remorseless rebels were determined to capture Shanghai at all hazards.

Matters continued in this alarming state for two or three weeks, during which time much fear and dread were entertained by foreigners as well as natives. Almost every resident went about armed, and had weapons handy in his house night and day; the native domestics were held in distrust, especially if they were Cantonese. The ordinary affairs of the settlement were in a measure suspended, and all who were friends of law and order cheerfully lent their aid in money and person to defend it. Besides doing so, the walled city was garrisoned by Indian troops.

At last the banners of the Taiping advanced force could be seen in the suburbs, and a notice was surreptitiously posted up, proposing to the foreign authorities that if they gave up the native city the settlement should not be interfered with. This proposition was rejected, although it was favourably entertained by those who carried on a contraband traffic in arms and munitions of war. However, there were good men and true at the helm of affairs, who informed the invaders that unless they retired beyond the thirty mile boundary around the port, as stipulated with the chiefs at Nanking, they would be driven over it by main force. Still it was abundantly evident that both city and settlement were in imminent peril.

Just at this time, when everything presented the most gloomy aspect, a providential check was given to the progress of the main body of the rebels by an unprecedented fall of snow. This heavy snowstorm continued almost

incessantly for fifty-eight successive hours, and covered the ground to the height of thirty inches. It remained more or less for several weeks to obstruct communications before it entirely thawed away. On ordinary land this would not have been the case, but the country around Shanghai is so intersected with creeks, canals, and ditches, that it is a most difficult matter for any body of men to traverse it at other times. About a fortnight elapsed before any of the rebels made their appearance again within view of the settlement, leaving time to finish the construction of substantial inner barricades, and push on the works forming an embankment and ditch for the outer defences.

This providential delay of hostilities was most valuable in allowing time for the arrival of reinforcements. Among the first to make their appearance at this fresh seat of war were the Royal Engineers, under the command of Major Gordon, who subsequently performed so distinguished a part in crushing this hydra-headed monster of rebellion.

These were days of great rejoicing to the inhabitants, both foreign and native, of the beleaguered settlement and city, when they saw regiment after regiment of British soldiers land upon the spacious Bund, or marine parade. As they marched through the streets with bands playing, colours flying in the breeze, and bayonets glittering in the sun, crowds of Chinese, male and female, lined the route, every one grinning and chin-chinning with the greatest satisfaction. It was curious to note their high estimation of the valour of our forces, and the protection of our authorities, as compared with those of their own soldiers and mandarins. In them they had little or no confidence for the protection of their persons and property against the insurgents, and they openly solicited the aid of the British authorities.

In a petition from the gentry, elders, merchants and people to H.M. Consul, they addressed him thus:—"Respectfully, O Consul! we address you. When, beforetime, the rebellion spread on the eastern bank of the river, and murder, arson and every kind of violence were brought near Shanghai, you issued a proclamation on our behalf, tranquillizing us and promising protection. When again our trade was cut off, provisions became almost unobtainable, and in the morning we could not tell what the evening might bring forth; then, when we united to beg you to devise measures with us to clear the country and save the people, pitying our misery exceedingly, you conjointly with the military authorities, kept the rebels off. For this we are most grateful. But the rebels murder now more ferociously than ever, declaring that when the western horde arrives their fixed determination is to attack Shanghai on all sides and take it; so that our supplies of fuel, rice, tea, oil, silk, cloth, and drugs will be entirely cut off. The merchants and tradesmen now sit idle, the fields are deserted, agriculture ceases, the silk-rearing stops, and unspeakable misery results. Considering, therefore the benevolence and power of your noble country (the first among the nations), reflecting on your love for us Chinamen, though of another race, and bearing in mind that though the long-haired thieves were originally in arms against their own countrymen, they are now against foreigners also, and as your brave soldiers are coming here in clouds sufficient to destroy the rebels, we humbly pour out our minds, and supplicate your minister at Peking to send them forth to sweep rebellion out of the land, and save the people from destruction."

As to the Chinese authorities, they were in raptures at the arrival of our forces, and did everything in their power to

make them comfortable. There being no barracks in the city or settlement, the greater number of the troops were quartered in the Buddhist temples, some of which are spacious buildings, with abundance of accommodation. In these cases the priests were confined to some obscure part of the edifice, or turned out altogether, while all public service in them was suspended. Generally the great central hall was turned into the officers' mess-room, and while the giant images looked down upon the unholy scene at dinner-time, the vaulted chamber re-echoed with song and laughter. To realize such a scene in this country, we must suppose some cathedral occupied by a regiment of soldiers, where men and officers bivouacked and had their meals, thereby desecrating the sacred edifice. Yet the Chinese thought it no desecration. On the contrary, the taoutai, or chief magistrate, thought it an honour to have them in these temples, and sent the officers cases of champagne and other wines to regale themselves.

It was a brilliant sight when the officers sat down to mess. Among the recesses hung the regimental colours and trophies the regiment had captured in the campaign. On the altar lay swords and shakos. Before it a long table was improvised, and covered with the mess-plate filled with all the goodly viands that could be had. Each officer sat at table with his Chinese attendant behind him, who changed his plate or filled his wine-glass with an alacrity only exhibited by an experienced waiter. In the verandah at the entrance the band discoursed pleasant music, while the interior was lighted up with gaily-coloured lanterns. As the viands were discussed, and the wine was freely circulated, toasts and songs went round in remembrance of home. Altogether, during the Chinese campaigns, the military had no

pleasanter time than when they were quartered in Shanghai.

My comrades and I were directed to inspect these strange quarters, and have them put in some kind of order before they were occupied by the troops. We had some strange experiences of them and the priests, and found the latter a cringing lot of fellows who had no veneration for their religious places. The chief thing they grieved at was the loss of the meat-offering that used to be brought by devotees to the altar.



A BUDDHIST TEMPLE.

"Never mind that," was the assurance I made to a fat old priest in a fine temple within the city walls, where the 67th regiment was to be quartered. "There will be plenty of 'chow-chow,' here for everybody when the soldiers come. Suppose you have good cook and big kitchen, Chinaman can cook for officers, and get plenty dollar and 'chow-chow.'"

"Can do," responded the priest, "me number one cook,

my sarve all dishes proper, and have three, four piecee men can assist me." And so it was, the priests abandoned their devotions for the more profitable, and in all likelihood, congenial occupation of preparing viands for the "barbarian" soldiers. Such are the strange irreconcilable anomalies in the Chinese character, which puzzle foreigners to understand.





CHAPTER XXIX.

Fugitives at the Bubbling-Well Temple.—Buddhist Priests invoking their deities.—Horrible sight of dead and dying refugees.—A Temple of Horrors.—I discover the ex-Mandarin in the last stage of existence.—I go to the Buddhist Priests and get food for the famished creatures.—Their delight at being fed.—I obtain a sedan-chair, and remove Meng-kee to the settlement.—The foreign residents subscribe for the maintenance of the starved fugitives.

NOTWITHSTANDING the topographical knowledge obtained by the reconnoitring expeditions from Shanghai into the surrounding country, the commander-in-chief of the British forces deemed it necessary for future operations in the field to have a general military survey made. This important duty devolved upon the Royal Engineer corps, who performed their task sometimes under the fire of the enemy, and elicited the highest encomiums from the general. Amongst others, I was occupied in this work, and learning one day that a number of poor people had taken up their abode in a temple not far from the settlement, proceeded thither to see if any information could be gained from them. On arriving at the place known to foreigners as the Bubbling-Well, so named from an ancient well out of which bubbles of gas issue, I was attracted to a small temple opposite, from whence came the dissonant sounds of Chinese musical

instruments. On entering the sacrificial hall, I found a Buddhist priest in high canonicals sacrificing a paper horse to his deities, which was consumed by fire, evidently for the purpose of furnishing some defunct Chinaman with a steed to journey through Hades.

Everything about this small temple was unusually clean for China, and the bonzes were particularly comfortable-looking priests, apparently well fed, and gorgeously clad in embroidered silks and satins, while the decorations and images were of the richest description. I waited to witness a part of the ceremony, and was rather favourably impressed with the manner in which the chief priest read from a scroll the service for the occasion, and the grace with which he made his genuflexions before an altar glittering with gold and silver, under the illumination of quite a galaxy of tapers. There was nothing gloomy about the place or the service, while the performers and the audience seemed amazingly delighted with the ceremony.

I then inquired of an attendant where the refugees were located, and was directed to the rear of the building, where two other temples were situated, one of considerable size, painted red, and called by foreign residents the "Red Joss-house." I entered the smallest temple first, and beheld a sight that struck me with horror. In the middle of the place sat a gigantic, grimy-looking image of Buddha, on an altar covered with the dust and dirt of years, while around lay the dead and dying, some like living skeletons, and evidently wasting away from sheer inanition.

Passing through this lazar-house, I crossed a court-yard, and entered the great red joss-house, which presented a sight that well-entitled it to be named "The Temple of Horrors." Here stood erect on each side of a high-vaulted,

gloomy chamber, four hideous colossal figures of war deities, scowling from their pedestals with ferocious aspect. As usual, in the centre of this sacrificial hall was a gigantic image of Buddha, and another deity at his side standing up with clasped hands, and having a benign cast of countenance. But the appearance of the human beings lying about on the filthy earthen floor was vastly more repulsive than what had been witnessed in the smaller temple. Here lay some forty men, women, and children huddled together, and left to perish without food or raiment. One man lay dead at the foot of the altar, as if he had fallen on his face. Another body was that of a woman who had died more calmly, with evidently her daughter hanging over her in the last stage of illness. At the sound of my voice the poor girl raised her head and looked around with a vacant stare for a moment, and then turned to pillow her head upon the emaciated body of her mother, as if to say, "Here let me die." Two other dead bodies lay covered with some matting and rags in a corner.

Of those who were still alive, few were able to rise or to answer coherently the questions which were put to them. One old man who had managed to separate himself from the others, lay in a corner screened by some mats, and as I was about to leave, to see if the well-fed priests had not some rice to spare these poor hungry creatures, he muttered some words in a husky voice, which caused me to stop. The emaciated refugee raised himself feebly on one hand, and with the other beckoned me to lean towards him, and whispered in my ear, "Dost thou not know me?" I shook my head in the negative, when the strange questioner said, in little stronger tones, "I am Meng-kee, whose surname is Loo, the father of A-Lee."

I started back with affright at the intelligence, and gazed earnestly at the miserable object. There was but little light in that den of horror, but it was sufficient to trace the lineaments of his once noble countenance. But, ah! how changed his person, and how different the circumstances since last I had seen him at Peking! Then he was a mandarin high in office, clothed in the rich silk and satin habiliments of his rank, and walking with stately tread through the apartments of his luxurious mansion, among wealthy relatives and friends. Now he was a starved outcast, in rags, lying upon a filthy mat, in a den of disease and death.

After saying a few kindly words of assurance to Meng-kee, I hurried out of the great joss-house into the small temple occupied by the bonzes. The ceremonies were over, and on inquiry of an attendant, I was shown into the refectory, where the priests were regaling themselves with the food-offerings that had been laid before the altar by their devotee. Without upbraiding them for not relieving the starving fugitives, I at once asked for some rice and fish, and told them they should be paid handsomely, showing at the same time a handful of bright Mexican dollars out of my pocket. The silver key opened the callous hearts of these heathen priests, who had not a drop of the real milk of human kindness in their natures. They grinned acquiescence, and improved the occasion by selling the meat-offerings at a higher price than they usually do.

On returning to the temple with a goodly quantity of rice and fish, carried by two attendants, I first gave a supply to my old friend Meng-kee, and then distributed small portions to the most needful of the other occupants of that dreadful lazarus-house. These starving creatures cried with frantic joy

at sight of the food. Many who had scarcely shown signs of life before, now rose up, holding out their hands, and screaming, "Rice! more rice!" In every case they were fugitives from the Taipings, who had seized the young men and women of their families, and left the parents and children to starve and die. They mostly belonged to the better class of farming people, and were entire strangers in the neighbourhood, so they had no relatives or friends to assist them.

With some difficulty I obtained a sedan-chair, and got my feeble friend carried to Shanghai; and after having learned that her father had left A-Lee comfortably at Nanking under the protection of the Kan Wang, I enjoined the mandarin to refrain from giving an account of his privations until he had obtained some repose.

On reaching the foreign settlement, I at once reported to my superior officer, what I had seen and done, who approved of it, not only on the score of humanity, but because Meng-kee could in all probability furnish the survey department with valuable information regarding the interior of the country. Accordingly he was lodged in a quiet place adjoining the quarters of the Sappers and Miners, and proper food and clothing furnished to him.

When the foreign residents were made aware of the shocking scenes to be witnessed at the Bubbling Well Temple, they lost not an hour in having food prepared for the relief of the fugitives who were still alive, and the municipal authorities sent out coffins to bury the dead. One benevolent gentleman took an active part in raising subscriptions for feeding and clothing them, and his appeals were amply responded to by the generous community. The money was judiciously spent in having abundance of rice

cooked at the kitchen of the priests next door, who became all of a sudden very careful of their famishing countrymen and women, when they found the foreigners so liberal with their money.

Moreover, the large temple was thoroughly cleansed, and the interior partitioned off with boards and matting, so that the remnants of families could live separate, and not be exposed to the inclemency of the weather. Application was also made to the chief magistrate for permission to keep the place as a refuge only for distressed fugitives. This was granted, while two or three native police were sent to keep away professional beggars from receiving the foreigners' bounty. The whole was for a time under the hands of a trustworthy Chinaman, appointed by the benevolent resident already mentioned.

The members of a Chinese charitable society in the walled city, hearing of this voluntary act of foreigners to relieve the distressed people, became ashamed that their proper office should be thus forestalled. Accordingly, they sent a deputation to the British consul, offering to take the management of the affair, and raise subscriptions in future amongst the Chinese. This was acceded to, and the refuge became a permanent institution during the rebellion, forming one of the bright features in the dark progress of the Taiping movement.





CHAPTER XXX.

The Mandarin's narrative.—He carries a despatch for the Chung Wang, the fighting Taiping Chief.—Organization of the rebel forces.—He delivers the despatch, and proceeds on to Shanghai.—Tactics of the rebel soldiery.—Obliged to act as a spy.—His disgust at the occupation.—Reduced to beggary and starvation.—Reaches the Bubbling-Well Temple, expecting to succumb to his miseries.



ENG-KEE soon recovered from his starving condition, and voluntarily offered to give an account of what he had witnessed during his sojourn among the Taipings.

At first he told me about his journey from Peking, and to this part of his narrative I listened, you will easily suppose, with great attention, and felt not a little uneasy when the name of Cut-sing was mentioned.

Then the ex-mandarin proceeded with his narrative after leaving Nanking. "I rode out at the south gate," he said, "with my mounted escort, feeling well satisfied that I was going upon a mission of peace to negotiate terms of amity between your honourable commanders and my new masters. I became more impressed with the ultimate success of our cause from what I had seen in the Tien Wang's capital, than what had previously come under my notice. So I journeyed on for several days with a hopeful feeling that in the end I should succeed. The principal despatch I carried was addressed to the famous Chung Wang, who is commander-

in-chief of the Taiping forces, and was then in the field with a large army near the city of Soochow. On the way we communicated with the officers in command of each post, who received me very graciously as a messenger on important business from the Tien Wang. Still I could not help observing that their respect for him and his decrees was very different from what I had witnessed among the levies at Nanking. There appeared to me to be an absence of obedience to his commands in obeying the Sabbath, and in other particulars. From what I saw and heard I came to the conclusion that the authority of the great impostor is very little heeded outside the walls of his stronghold, and it diminished the farther I left it behind. Moreover, the licence amongst the soldiers in the camps was worse than anything I ever saw among Tartar troops."

I here asked the question suggested by my superior officer, "Whether the Taipings had a regular embodied force or not?" and a reply in the affirmative was given. "On this point I got information from the officer in charge of my escort. He told me that there was a veteran corps composed of old and well-trying men of several years' standing, many of whom had joined the movement from the beginning. From this corps a draft was taken to form the nucleus of the body of men sent upon any special service or expedition, the remainder of the armed force, in each case, being younger recruits, or peasants pressed into the service. These would number generally as ten to one of the old rebels, whose duty principally was to bring the younger volunteers or pressed men into a proper state of submission, as well as to inspire courage in those who might recoil from their allegiance. Another plan they have of separating unwilling followers is to draft from one district to another the inhabi-

tants who have been conquered. Besides this, I observed myself that there were not only few men of middle age in their veteran ranks, but an unusual number of boys. Every officer has several attending on him, and where there is one grown-up man, there are two or three youths from twelve to eighteen years of age. These lads have all been kidnapped at various places, but appear delighted with their sanguinary profession. In most cases they act as slave-drivers, forcing the labouring people to carry heavy burdens, and toil at various works that the leaders require to be executed. These peasants are treated most cruelly, and forced to work in chains, under pain of death.

"When we reached that part of the grand canal between Chin-Keang and Soochow," the mandarin continued, "we passed through districts where the soldiery revelled in plenty of food, luxuries, and fine clothes, though as far as I know they did not receive regular pay. Evidently they lived like pirates on whatever they could obtain in the shape of plunder, either in kind or specie. If the capture of a rich city produced a great harvest of booty, the men generally—as in the case of Soochow—benefited by the prize; if otherwise, the neighbouring farmers were compelled to contribute rice, pigs, fowls, vegetables, and the like farm-produce, to feed the troops. While travelling along I frequently saw the unfortunate peasants bringing in such supplies to the camps, with chains and ropes round their necks in token of servitude. At length we reached Soochow, where I presented my credentials to Chung Wang, who received me rather coolly when he found that I was not a fighting man. Only those who were acquainted with military tactics were received by him in high estimation. When I pointed out to him the object of my mission to try and secure the

neutrality if not the aid of the foreign forces at Shanghai, he smiled incredulously, saying that he had already tried to do so without success. However, he gave me a dispatch to the general in command of the force at Kah-ding, who would direct me what to do. When I reached that place, and was told that I must be a secret emissary, and dress as an Imperialist, to spy the land about Shanghai and its neighbourhood, I would there and then have abandoned the enterprise; but I saw to have done that would be instant death, so I resolved to keep on good terms with them until I had an opportunity to escape."

"Before the main body of a rebel army attacks an important city, or upon any spot selected as a prize, the generals in command send spies and emissaries secretly to feel the way, and to spread false reports among the affrighted inhabitants. In the midst of the panic and alarm caused by these reports and intrigues, the spies set fire to buildings in the outskirts of towns and villages, or farm houses, under cover of the night. Then the poor villagers abandon their homes with their families and what little property and food they can carry, rushing into the city with breathless haste, and spreading exaggerated reports of the numbers and doings of the Taiping forces seen by them. In the confusion, a body of rebels appear in the distance; their gaudy multi-coloured dress producing a strange bewildering effect upon the simple people; their long, shaggy, black hair adding wildness to their look, and their melancholy shouts and yells striking terror into the hearts of the timid Imperialists. If this demonstration succeeds in frightening or demoralizing the authorities, then thousands of insurgents from the main body rush on with guns, spears, swords or daggers, carrying all before them; capturing the doomed

city; putting the loyal soldiers to death; enslaving the male inhabitants; ravishing the females, and plundering everywhere. It is then, and then only, that the cowardly chiefs appear for the first time, to show their authority, by securing their large share of the spoil. This was the mode of warfare adopted in the capture of Pao-shan, to the eastward of Shanghai, of which I was an unwilling instrument in bringing about, under terror of death at the hands of my fellow spies and emissaries if they suspected my loyalty to the cause. O how it grieved my heart and wounded my pride to be associated with such depraved off-scourings of humanity, who gloried in robbing their industrious countrymen, and reducing them and their families to slavery and the vilest of purposes. It was then that I repented of my error in leaving a happy home for the delusive prospects of ambition."

The old man here paused in his narration, and gave vent to his feelings in groans of mental agony, holding his head with both hands, and swaying himself from side to side.

"What debasement of my former rank! I, who mingled amongst the most refined people at the imperial court, was now obliged to consort with the lowest ruffians, who committed the vilest acts. But I did save some poor, innocent creatures from the clutches of these monsters. They were a father, mother, and one daughter, living comfortably on a rich farm. The young men of the household were seized, and forced to carry their agricultural produce to the camp, some distance on. I was left in charge to take care of the property in the house. When the plunderers had gone I told the family to take what portable things were handy, and come with me to Shanghai for protection. They readily agreed to the proposal, and we left without delay, travelling the greater part of the night. It was bitter cold weather as

we trudged dolefully along the narrow circuitous paths through the fields, in order to avoid the rebels on the main roads and canals. We scarcely knew our way, except where we found other fugitives coming from the westward, and then, being all creatures in the lowest depths of adversity, we joined in companionship to find some place of relief. For many weary days and nights we travelled the desolated country, and encountered a band of marauders who robbed us of every coin and valuable in our possession, so that when we came in sight of Shanghai we were without food or money to buy any. The only place of refuge open to us was the great temple at the Bubbling Well, where we took up our abode. The farmer, his wife, and daughter, succumbed to the privations they had undergone, and I was fast sinking under the pangs of hunger when you came to my relief. Oh, what horrors I endured in that frightful place. Throughout the livelong day I lay gazing upon those hideous images, and passed the long, weary nights in darkness, with hunger gnawing at my vitals, vainly trying to sleep, while I was disturbed by the groans of the dying. At that terrible time I felt that death would be a happy relief from the agonies I endured both of body and mind. Yet I wished to live, so that I might again have my beloved daughter under my own protection and out of the hands of these blasphemous impostors and robbers."

This allusion to A-Lee was by no means reassuring, and to divert his thoughts I asked him to give me as clear an idea as he could of the creeks, canals, roads, and paths in the country he had traversed. This he did, and before our interview terminated I acquired a large amount of topographical information which was of the utmost value during the ensuing campaign.



CHAPTER XXXI.

Allied Campaign against the Taiping nsurgents.—Meng-kee employed as a guide to the British forces.—Successful operations.—Admiral Protet killed in action.—Operations suspended during the heat of summer.—The Taipings make fresh attacks.—The American General Ward killed in action.—Hostilities renewed in autumn.—The Taipings driven beyond the thirty mile boundary.

THE rebellion was now in the twelfth year of its existence, and it was increasing in strength. Had the Tartar Government depended solely upon its own resources, in all probability the insurgents would be still devastating the country. But under the skill and valour of foreigners, it was crushed and ultimately exterminated in two years and a half. Although the leading men in this victorious campaign, and the military and naval forces under their command, were British, it is only justice to assign a portion of the laurels to our gallant French Allies, and a contingent of disciplined Chinese first embodied by an American. This force acted loyally towards its legitimate sovereign, and was so increased and so skilfully commanded by a British officer, that it gave the finishing stroke to the prostrate monster of rebellion. I need not tell you that this commander was Major Gordon, my superior officer.

When I placed the information I had obtained from

Meng-kee before Major Gordon, he saw that it would prove useful to the expeditionary forces in their first movements into the field. Accordingly, he consulted with General Staveley, and recommended Meng-kee, as an intelligent and trustworthy Chinaman, to accompany the staff-officers and interpreters. The general acquiesced in the appointment, and so the ex-mandarin was placed upon his roll of supernumeraries with good pay.

Before commencing operations, Brigadier-General Staveley, Vice-Admiral Sir James Hope, and the French Admiral Protet, held a council of war, at which they drew up an agreement for the defence of Shanghai, and resolved to capture all the towns and fortified posts in possession of the rebels within a radius of thirty English miles. The allied force to take the field was calculated at about three thousand military, and one thousand naval British officers and men of all arms; about two thousand French, equally furnished by the army and navy, and some thirty-five guns. The campaign began in March, and in two months five of the enemy's strongholds were captured, with great loss on their side, and comparatively small on that of the Allies. During the progress of the operations, the force was augmented by two thousand disciplined Chinese and Imperial troops under the command respectively of General Ward, an American, and a native general.

The next successful affair was at the recapture of Tsingpoo, in about the middle of May. This was a walled city of great strength, which the insurgents had held for several years. It was taken by escalade, after a stubborn resistance, and two thousand prisoners were captured, besides half that number killed and wounded. The French did good service in this engagement, where they made a great breach in the

city wall with a 68-pounder gun in a gunboat which they managed to navigate up the intricate channel leading from the Wong-poo river to the city moat.

These operations were carried on to the north-west, west, and south-west of Shanghai, within the circumscribed radius. After the capture of Tsing-poo, the allied army marched in a south-eastern direction from the boundary, crossing the Wong-poo river into the country between its eastern bank and the sea, where the Taipings held a chain of fortified stockades and towns leading along the coast to Ningpo. The first stronghold attacked was called Nan-jao, when the Allies sustained a great loss in the death of Admiral Protet, who was shot through the heart while bravely leading his men on to the attack. His death was felt as a severe loss by his brother commanders ; and from the universal esteem in which he was held as a man and an officer, great sympathy was felt by all ranks at his untimely fate. His remains were brought to Shanghai, and interred with the highest honours that could be bestowed upon the deceased, not only by the representatives of his own nation and foreign powers, but by the highest Chinese functionaries. Even the Emperor of China issued an imperial decree acknowledging the services he had rendered to his Majesty, and conferred posthumous honours on his memory, according to the formula for a high mandarin.

By this time the deadly heats of summer had set in, with the rainy south-west monsoon, which annually brings in its train increased disease and mortality on the pestilential plain around Shanghai. It so happened, also, that the season was unexampled in the spread of epidemic and endemic diseases, among both natives and foreigners. The allied ranks became decimated, and the forces returned to

Shanghai and other towns. So great were the effects of the oppressive heat and disease, that a cessation of hostilities took place for several months.

Meanwhile, the Taipings took advantage of this stoppage of the campaign. They attacked Tsing-poo, which was garrisoned by the ordinary Chinese soldiery, who could make no stand against the enemy, and it was once more in their hands. General Ward, the American, seeing this, advanced with his disciplined Chinese upon the city, and recaptured it. He also achieved further successes, in all of which it was evident that Chinese troops, armed and disciplined in the European manner, with foreign officers to command them, were not much inferior to ordinary British or French infantry and artillery. The men had confidence in their commander, and so had he in them, for he displayed great coolness and personal courage. Unfortunately his fearless disposition led him into danger, and he met with a premature death in action. This was at a place named Tzoo-che, twenty-five miles from Ningpo, his mortal wound having come from the hands of a foreigner in the rebel ranks, armed with a rifle. As in the case of Admiral Protet's death, the emperor issued a decree recounting the eminent services of General Ward, in which it states that, "His Majesty has inspected the report, and is filled with admiration and grief. Truly he was a brave man—a soldier that caused no shame. We order the Board of Ceremonies to bestow rites upon him, according to his rank, to comfort his departed spirit: publish it far and wide. Respect this!"

In the autumn the Allies again took the field, and before winter set in not only recaptured all the places taken during the summer, but drove the enemy with great slaughter

beyond the thirty-mile boundary, so that there was not a Taiping in arms within that radius, equal to an area of 1,500 square miles. This brought to a close the active hostilities of the British and French forces against the Taipings, who had such a lesson in warfare—short, sharp, and decisive—that they never afterwards ventured to approach a foreign settlement.





CHAPTER XXXII.

Investment of Nanking by Imperialist army.—Sufferings of the besieged.—Some eat human flesh of murdered victims.—Anxiety of the Mandarin's Daughter about her father.—Colloquy between the Kan Wang and an American Missionary.—The Kan Wang's atrocity.—Flight of Issachar Roberts after the murder of his servant.



THE defeat of the most valiant of the Taiping forces by the foreign troops at Shanghai created the utmost consternation among the leaders and their adherents at Nanking, not merely on account of its moral effect in shaking the faith of vacillating followers in the "divine" (?) power of the Tien Wang, who promised victory from heaven, but because the majority of those who had been killed, wounded, or taken prisoner in the numerous engagements, were picked men, who had become comparatively efficient soldiers. Moreover, their discomfiture at Shanghai gave fresh courage to the listless, undisciplined Imperial soldiery entrenched before the western walls of Nanking, and they made renewed efforts to invest the city, with the object of starving the garrison into a surrender. Hitherto the chief supply of provisions came by way of the river, as the boats with cargo could come up without being molested by the Imperial gunboats. Now these had arrived in great force, and the chief supplies of food were cut off. Rice, the commonest necessary upon

which the Chinese live, could only be procured in its coarsest state, and that at a high price, and scarcely any animal food could be had for money.

Then followed all the horrors of a besieged city, with scenes of starvation, death, and worse, which are unknown in European warfare—frightful as they sometimes are. The misery inside the walls, and even in the suburb along the river bank was beyond conception. It was no uncommon thing to see a dead body lying by the roadside, or some wretched being breathing their last from starvation. Such was the destitution that human flesh was greedily devoured, and inhuman butchers actually went about selling it by weight. These cannibal caterers were stated on reliable authority to have obtained their supplies by attacking and murdering some solitary wayfarers, and tying their bodies up to the trees, from which they cut the flesh and let it dry in the sun.

Seeing the probable scarcity of food, the chiefs and soldiers had taken the precaution of laying in stocks of beef dried in the sun, which would keep fresh for a long time in the hottest weather. The consumption of this nourishing food enabled the men to stand the fatigues of the field in defending their positions against the attacks of the Imperialists. Nevertheless they were greatly harassed, and suffered many privations, so that when they had a chance they would desert and go over to the enemy. As many as ten thousand at one time went over, when they found that they would not suffer punishment. These were generally young recruits or pressed men, who would shave their heads and wear a white turban in token of their submission.

In these days of disaster to the Taipings, Loo A-Lee was

in great tribulation, not so much from physical privations, as from mental anxiety. Not having had any tidings from her father, which he faithfully promised to send by every opportunity, she concluded that he had got into trouble. Although it was hateful for her to have any communication with Cut-sing, yet she had no other source of information concerning her father's movements. At first he told her of his safe arrival at Soochow, and that the Chung Wang had sent him on his diplomatic mission to Shanghai; and as neither of them had received any letter, he considered that the urgency of his duties had prevented him from writing on private affairs. Days and months passed, and still no intelligence, and at last even the emissary exhibited a troubled countenance when he had no comforting news to tell his fair questioner; for although he was a callous-hearted and thoroughly selfish man, yet he had a real regard for the old mandarin, and still more so for his lovely daughter. Accordingly, he wrote confidentially to his fellow-spies with the army about the missing emissary.

There lived at this time in Nanking, an American missionary under the auspices of Hoong Seu-tsuen, who had known the impostor at Canton before he started on his career. At first, on his arrival in the city, he was treated well by his former friend, and also by the Kan Wang, whom he had previously known, and was lodged in a house with attendants at the expense of the Taiping treasury. These worthies made use of this missionary to communicate to the foreign authorities the ostensible friendly relations they wished to hold with them, which he did by forwarding translations of their decrees for publication in Shanghai. Through this person Cut-sing had frequently obtained intelligence of important matters that had transpired in the

settlement, as communicated to him by the contraband traders. The emissary, with a view to gather any information concerning Meng-kee, called one day on the missionary.

"Learned father," said he, on being ushered into his presence, "I salute you!"

The person he addressed, was an ordinary-looking American, habited in dirty yellow robes, and with a high-peaked, gilded hat on his head, something like a mitre. He was the spiritual adviser of the Tien Wang. "Honourable sir," he replied, "I return the salutation, and ask your excellency to be seated."

After some more compliments were passed, the emissary asked, "Have you any late news from your foreign friends in Shanghai?"

He answered, "My servant has just brought me some letters, by a boat which arrived this morning. From these I find that the foreign authorities have commenced hostilities against our troops, and have driven them with great slaughter from their fortified positions around the city and settlement."

"All that we know. But do your letters mention anything about friendly proclamations having been circulated by our emissaries?"

"They do; and likewise state that the foreigners have issued notifications warning our people to retire beyond the boundary of ninety *lee*, stipulated previously for at Nanking."

"Had any one seen our emissaries who published proclamations?"

"No, but they say there are several Chinese in the foreign army, who act as guides through the country."

"That is just what I suspected," ejaculated Cut-sing,

rising in an excited manner, his eyes glancing wildly, "and he is among them."

"Who is among them?" questioned the missionary; "who—" He was going to repeat the query, when their colloquy was interrupted by a loud noise and screaming outside in the courtyard. Both of them rushed out to see what was the matter.

What was their surprise when they saw the Kan Wang, with his left hand twisted in the hair of the missionary's chief attendant, and his right hand flourishing a heavy executioner's sword in the air, while he uttered the most fearful imprecations against the young man, who fell on his knees and implored mercy.

"Spare me! spare my life!" he cried, in a quivering voice, his face livid with affright. "I am innocent, your highness. I have done nothing wrong against the holy, heavenly kingdom."

"It is false," roared the Kan Wang, making the place resound with his loud voice. "You are a traitor; a spy that sends information to the Tartar imp."

"Calm thyself, great sir," interposed the missionary. "The boy is faithful, and I will vouch for his loyalty."

"Keep back," the enraged Wang said, "or you may suffer also. My elder brother has given me proofs of his treachery, and we have resolved that he must die by my hand." Upon saying which he struck him down with his own hand.

Horror-stricken, the missionary essayed to address the Taiping chief on the gravity of the crime he had committed. The infuriated monster told him to be silent, and stormed at him, seized hold of him, shook him violently, and struck him in the face, evidently with the intention of exciting him

to retaliate, so that he might have an excuse for slaying him also. However, Issachar Roberts, for that was his name, prudently kept his tongue, and received the insults and blows meekly. This had its effect, the Kan Wang handed the blood-stained scimitar to one of his attendants at the gate outside, and left in his sedan-chair, accompanied by his retinue, who guarded the entrance.

This tragic scene not only frightened the missionary, but Cut-sing was himself in a state of dread, not knowing where the murderous weapon in his master's hand might fall. He had never beheld him in such a passion before, and it must have been something heinous in his estimation that the youth had committed for which he inflicted such a sanguinary summary punishment. In vain did the missionary try to fathom the cause of this act, and both of them discussed the matter fully without arriving at a satisfactory solution.

"What would you advise me to do under the circumstances?" Mr. Roberts inquired of the emissary.

Without a moment's hesitation, he answered, "Leave Nanking without delay; your life is not safe here for another day." Upon saying this, Cut-sing left abruptly, and hastened to Kan Wang's palace. On the way he turned over in his mind the scene he had just witnessed, and putting it side by side with some sanguinary acts of the Tien Wang, such as beheading two unfortunate scribes for making errors in the impious titles he assumed in his proclamations, he felt his own head rather shaky on his shoulders, and made up his mind to devise some scheme, that he might leave the famished city and take with him the mandarin's daughter.



CHAPTER XXXIII.

Foong Cut-sing communicates tidings of her father to Loo A-Lee.—He advises her to leave Nanking for Soochow, to which she agrees.—Her departure with a party of Taipings.—Route through a desolate country, ruined villages, and wretched inhabitants.—The Grand Canal in a dilapidated state.—Arrival at Soochow.—Foreign recruits and prisoners.—A-Lee's recollections of this once beautiful city.—Its aspect now ruinous and deplorable.—Her remarks thereon to Cut-sing.—Some foreign officers give information concerning her father.—She takes up her abode with the family of the Mo Wang, a Taiping Chief.

SOME days after the foregoing occurrence, Loo A-Lee was seated in an arbour in the Kan Wang's garden, gazing wistfully at the distant mountains. Her thoughts were naturally of her father, and she speculated upon his possible movements, little guessing that we had already come into contact with each other. The more she thought about him, the more uneasy she became. She had not the slightest grounds for supposing that evil days had fallen upon him, still such a presentiment haunted her mind day and night.

While she was in this frame of mind, the emissary entered the garden, and approached the arbour where she was sitting.

"I have come, fair lady," he said, in a most respectful manner, "to communicate some intelligence that may interest you."

"Be seated, kind sir," she said, with a winning smile, for she surmised that it was some news relating to her father.

"Yesterday there arrived here five foreign soldiers who had been taken prisoners by our troops near Shanghai. The Kan Wang and other chiefs had them up before a board of inquiry this day to elicit information from them regarding the strength of the foreign and Tartar forces in the field, but they were very reticent on these points, or at least the information they gave is not considered satisfactory. However, I questioned them after the examination, if there were any Chinese about the foreign generals to assist in guiding their movements, and they said there were. On further questioning one man who had seen them often, he described one, who I have strong suspicions is your father."

"I thought as much, kind sir, and that you had come to tell me something about him; I thank you very much for the pleasing intelligence."

"I had some idea of this before from what the foreign missionary told me, and a vague hint from a brother emissary arrived from the front, but I refrained from saying anything to you about it until I could confirm the news. Now I know your great anxiety to communicate with him, if possible, and an opportunity will occur in a few days, when you may travel as far as Soochow, and there gain more correct intelligence concerning him. I am about to proceed on a diplomatic mission to the Chung Wang, our generalissimo, whose forces hold that city, and if you would place yourself under my protection, I shall feel highly honoured in escorting you thither. I may mention that there are several wives of officers ready to go and share the

privations of their husbands in the field, rather than remain in this city, stricken with famine and disorder."

"Since you mention that there are ladies ready to undertake the journey, I shall gladly be one of your party, and trust to your honourable protection, as I have hitherto done," she remarked, with significant emphasis.

"Credit me with making the best arrangements possible, fair lady. I can manage to get one sedan-chair with bearers for you to travel as far as the Grand Canal; the other ladies will ride on ponies, as most women at present are obliged to do. When we reach the canal, a large passenger boat will be ready for our party to take us on to Soochow. In the meantime I pray you to pack up your clothing and be in readiness to start at an hour's notice."

They parted mutually satisfied with the result of their interview; and A-Lee slept more soundly that night than any she had yet passed in the doomed city.

At length the day for her departure came, and she rejoiced at being able to leave the famished capital of Taipingdom and its impious rulers. When she came first to Nanking she was favourably impressed with their religious views. Since then she had seen and heard more of their presumptuous pretensions to divinity, which entirely changed her opinions. She had hoped that their doctrines, though crude and erroneous, might, notwithstanding, embrace some of the elements of Christianity. She found, to her sorrow, nothing of Christianity but its name, falsely applied to a system of revolting blasphemy.

The travelling party consisted of twelve persons, six men and six women. Of the former, four were chair-bearers, two of whom relieved each other in carrying Loo A-Lee. Cut-sing and an assistant emissary, together with the five

females, rode on ponies. There was very little to distinguish the sexes of the equestrians, for they all rode in the same straddling fashion. When they reached the south gate they had to exhibit passes; each person also had little wooden billets tied round the waist, with a Taiping seal impressed thereon. Indeed, every passenger, whether entering or leaving the city, was obliged to wear one of these billets, under pain of being punished as an imperialist spy. Did a Chinaman venture in without that badge, his head would be in the greatest danger.

From the gate the party made a detour and struck into the road leading to the Grand Canal. As they travelled at a walking pace, it took them three days to perform the journey. The country all the way was in a wretched condition, and the towns and villages presented a very sad spectacle. These once flourishing marts were entirely deserted, and thousands of houses were burnt to the ground. Here and there a solitary old man or old woman might be seen moving slowly and tremblingly among the ruins, musing and weeping over the terrible desolation that reigned around. At the ruined villages where they stopped, a small crowd of women was generally to be met with, trying to eke out a living by the sale of cooked rice and tea infused to the passers-by. All the able-bodied men were gone—some had been killed, but more enlisted in the rebel army, from whose ranks death alone could relieve them. All the old women they saw were left in contempt by the Taipings to till the fields, and all of them lamented the loss of their bread-winners. At one place two women were sitting on a bank and crying sadly, one for the loss of her husband and two sons, the other for her husband and father. One old woman, to whom she gave some charity,

said, "They killed my husband because he was not strong enough to do their labourer's work." "They carried off my daughter because she was pretty," said another. It was all one story—girls carried off, useful men compelled to go to the camps, old ones who might excite commiseration ruthlessly murdered. The number of dead bodies that continually met the eye was indescribably sickening to the heart. It was one great story of violence and wrong carried with a mighty hand throughout the land in the name of the Christian faith, by men as merciless as the stones on which they trod.

In good time, and without any mishap the party reached the Grand Canal, and stopped at the town of Tan-yan. Here the chair-bearers and ponies were left behind, and the others embarked in a passenger boat where the ladies were comfortably accommodated after their fatiguing journey, having had no other places to sleep in but on the earthen floors of the ruined houses. All of them thanked Foong Cutting for his attention during the journey, and his excellent arrangements in their canal voyage to Soochow, in which Loo A-Lee took the foremost part, to the great delight of the Taiping emissary.

As they journeyed along the canal they observed similar scenes of desolation to those seen on the highway from Nanking. The same sad story of death and devastation everywhere suggested itself. The land on either bank was waste to the distance of a mile, while the towing path was like an upturned graveyard. Human remains were lying about in all directions. This was especially observable near the town of Woo-see. During the retreat of the imperialists, after the fall of that place, the rebels followed them on horseback. No quarter was given to the fugitive troops,

whose ranks were augmented by the frightened peasantry, and all slain indiscriminately as they were overtaken. But the bones of the victims that strewed the towing path did not show half what the slaughter had been, for the waters of the canal concealed the remains of by far the greater number. Words cannot convey any idea of the utter ruin and desolation which marked the line of Taiping march from Nanking to Soochow.

From the dilapidated state of the towing-path, and the obstructions from wrecked boats in the canal, it was not until the fourth day of their departure from Tan-yan that they reached Soochow. The country around it, where flourishing farms formerly yielded heavy crops, was becoming a jungle; while the extensive suburbs, once teeming with an industrious population, were utterly destroyed. A few miserable beings were met with outside the gates, selling bean-curd and herbs, but with these exceptions none of the original inhabitants were to be found. In the wide moat which surrounds this large city, wild aquatic birds fluttered about, where only a year or two previously it was difficult to find a passage from the immense number of boats actively engaged in commerce and traffic.

A very large body of rebels was employed in the erection of defences outside the principal gate opening on the Grand Canal, for the purpose of defending that important entrance into the city, where a large number of boats were laden with foreign arms and ammunition, besides rich furniture plundered from the houses of the wealthy inhabitants, who had mostly fled with their families for safety to Shanghai. Heavy detachments of rebel soldiery were arriving from the east, who had been driven beyond the thirty mile boundary around that settlement by the allied foreign forces. A great

many of these men appeared to have been lately pressed into the service, and as a precaution against desertion they had the Chinese character for the Taiping dynasty tattooed on their cheeks. Others who refused under any conditions to serve in the rebel hordes of the impostor, Hoong Sew-Tsuen, or his fighting chief the so-called Chung Wang, were



FOREIGN PRISONER IN CAGE.

kept as prisoners, suffering from the torture of their shackles and insufficiency of food. Many of them were carried through the streets in iron-barred cages, where they could not even sit upright, and exposed to the jeers and scoffs of the populace.

Here the party disembarked, and entered Soochow by the Chang gate. A-Lee had never visited this famous city before, but she had read a good deal about its former grandeur and its wealthy, luxurious inhabitants. She remembered the description of it as the most beautiful and pleasant city in China, in the centre of a district which the poet compared to a terrestrial paradise. Its length and breadth were intersected by a network of canals, so that there was communication in all quarters both by water and land. It was divided into three parts, and its population were ashore and afloat: the first was within the walls, entered by six gates, and was twelve miles in circumference; the second without the walls, extending along the canals on each side; and the third formed by large junks crowded three abreast for miles, like streets of floating houses, having miniature gardens on their decks, and luxuriously furnished apartments in the interior, where persons of rank and wealth lived in grander style than in their mansions on shore. Besides these, there was a large fleet of trading vessels always in port loading and discharging commodities, not only with all the provinces of China, but also with Japan. To behold the immense numbers of people that were here continually in motion, and the throngs there were in every place of those who came to buy and sell, one would have imagined that people flocked to this great mart from every part of the empire to trade at Soochow.

Such were the recollections she had of this once famous city. Alas! how different was the aspect of the place under Taiping rule! Of the dwellings and shops on shore, the whole of their gaily decorated fronts had been torn down; and the luxurious boats on the water, after being plundered of their valuable contents, were destroyed for firewood, and

their hulls left rotting in the canals amidst broken furniture and other *débris* of destruction. The value of the plunder taken at the ransacking of these boats and houses was greater than on any previous occasion on the capture of a city, not excepting Nanking, for it was in a comparatively poor condition when it fell into rebel hands.

"This is a dreadful place," A-Lee remarked to the emissary as they threaded their way with difficulty through the ruinous streets. "I have always heard that it was the most beautiful city in our country, but now it is one of the ugliest. I wish I had not left Nanking, for, although it is not a desirable place to live in, yet I think it preferable to this."

"I agree with you," he quietly said, "the place has a dismal aspect, especially to me who has seen it in its former splendour. But I have no doubt, when the Heavenly Kingdom is thoroughly established it will be restored to a condition surpassing what it has ever been. This inevitable destruction of the 'imps' dwellings is necessary to root them out of the land, so that they may again rise like a phoenix from its ashes in renewed beauty."

If Cut-sing had observed the features of his fair companion, he would have remarked her horror and dismay at the frightful aspect of the city, but she prudently suppressed any remarks on this topic, and made inquiry as to the chief in whose residence she was to take up her abode.

"He is called the Mo Wang, fair lady, and holds the highest post in the city, where his wife and daughters reside with him, so that you will be honourably accommodated by ladies of rank."

This explanation was satisfactory, and she felt a little more confidence in having taken the advice of Cut-sing. Moreover, as they reached the quarter where the Mo Wang

resided, there were evidences that rebuilding was going forward. This functionary was appointed commandant of Soochow, and was one of the few leaders possessed of talent and education among the Taipings; and what was of more importance, used them in reconstructing what had been destroyed. In this way some of the best streets were restored in the vicinity of the official residences, and were new structures of a substantial character, but decorated in the usual gaudy manner.

What attracted her attention more than these signs of renovation was seeing a number of foreigners, dressed in military uniform, walking about this quarter of the city. Her curiosity was extreme, so she almost involuntarily exclaimed, "I wonder who these officers can be! Perhaps they could give me some tidings of my father, or—"

Before she could utter the name one of these foreign officers accosted the emissary, and they interchanged words as if they had known each other before; with a promise to meet again soon they parted. A-lee then repeated her thoughts by asking the question, "who are these foreigners?"

"Fair lady," he replied, "these are officers belonging to different foreign nations who have joined our holy cause, as Christians armed to fight the idolatrous Manchoos. Some have charge of our artillery, and others have drilled a select corps, armed with foreign weapons, and disciplined like the soldiers of their own countries. There are about two hundred of them in Soochow, and we expect a great many more to join our ranks who have been in the imperial service and have become dissatisfied. From them I expect to gain some intelligence concerning your father, if, as I suspect, he has joined the enemy.

A bright hopeful expression passed over her face as she

thanked her companion for this further piece of intelligence, by which she saw some prospect of not only seeing her father, but her lover. Whether he fathomed her train of thought or not, it is impossible to say, for by this time the porters who were carrying their baggage slung upon poles, called out to him that they were now at the Mo Wang's residence. It was a very pretentious building ; at the same time it had more chasteness of design in its architecture, and was less gaudy in its colouring, than the general style of Taiping palaces.

On arriving at the spacious gateway of the Yamoon, they were ushered into the reception-hall, where the commandant was conversing with some of his officers. When the emissary introduced his party, and explained who they were, he gave the ladies a kind welcome, and said that his wife and daughters would make them comfortable. A more enlivening part, however, was played by two of the Taiping officers, who came forward and recognised among the ladies two of their own wives. They greeted them in the most cordial and unembarrassed manner, greatly in contrast to the ancient Chinese salutation between man and wife, on meeting after a prolonged separation. Indeed, it was as hearty and affectionate a meeting as any between loving husbands and wives among Western nations. Had the Taipings followed the religion of the foreigners in as pure and cordial a manner as they did some of their social customs, they might have found in them their strongest allies, and perhaps have succeeded in overthrowing the Tartar dynasty.





CHAPTER XXXIV.

The Royal Engineers make a military survey of Shanghai and its environs.—Gordon appointed General of the "Ever-Victorious Army."—I also enter the Imperial service as one of his officers.—Gordon addresses the volunteers.—Re-organizes the disciplined native force.—Enters on a vigorous campaign by land and water.—Defeat of the insurgents in their strongholds.—Gallant action in the Hyson steamer.—Rebel prisoners treated leniently.—Siege of Soochow.—The Taiping chiefs capitulate.—I enter the city and learn that A-Lee is in the Mo Wang's house.

MEANWHILE I was busily engaged along with my comrades under the directions of Major Gordon in continuing the survey for a military plan of the country around Shanghai. Few persons can realize the labour involved, and the dangers the engineers were subjected to in the course of that survey, which by the time it was completed extended over 2,000 square miles of land and water. Such a task, undertaken in a peaceable country under ordinary circumstances, would be one of no small magnitude. But when it is considered that the greater part of it was performed in the face of a bloodthirsty enemy, or under fire, it must be admitted it was a rare example of "the pursuit of knowledge under difficulties." Previous to this survey foreigners had no map to guide them through the country but the erroneous and



COLONEL GORDON, R.E.
(Commander-in-Chief of the "Ever-Victorious Army.")



rudely-constructed plans of the Chinese, which were calculated more to mislead than otherwise. At first the allied forces were in a great measure prosecuting their operations in the dark, and were sometimes led into disaster by incompetent or treacherous native guides, who easily misled them in that extraordinary country, which is so intersected with fresh-water lakes, streams, and canals flooded by the mighty Yang-tsze, that it is no exaggeration to say that the area of water is nearly as great as that of the land within four hundred miles of the country which was surveyed. The only region in Europe that can compare with this vast system of natural and artificial fresh-water channels is the plain of Lombardy.

Now that the campaign within the thirty-mile radius was ended, the representatives of both nations urged upon the Chinese Government the desirability of increasing the native force in the field, and of having it officered by foreigners, placed under the command of an efficient general to take the post left vacant by the death of Ward, the American who was killed in action. He had been succeeded by his second in command named Burgevine, but that officer was dismissed for disloyalty; and his successor exhibited no capacity for generalship. At this time, therefore, the Imperial forces were in a disorganized state, and unable to follow up the successes of the Allies by driving the rebels from their strongholds beyond the boundary.

In this unsatisfactory state of affairs, Lee Hoong-chang, governor of Kiang-soo, applied to General Staveley to appoint a British officer to the post. This was offered to, and accepted by, Major Gordon, of the Royal Engineers, subject to the approval of the Horse Guards' authorities at home.

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"What news from the front?" Gordon inquired of me one day, as he saw me conversing with some of the disciplined Chinese, who had come into the surveying camp.

"Disaster," was my reply. "For the first time the 'Ever-Victorious Army' has met with an unfortunate defeat."

"How did it happen? Question these men, and translate their answers to me."

"It appears, sir, that they were defeated with great loss at the siege of Tai-tsang, a large city a mile or two beyond the boundary. The force consisted of two thousand five hundred men of all arms, with twenty-two guns, backed by a brigade of about five thousand undisciplined soldiers. After breaching the walls, a storming party managed to cross a wide moat by ladders, which broke down, when they were repulsed under a galling fire from the walls, which killed and wounded five foreign officers and some three hundred men. After this a general retreat took place, and two large siege guns became so imbedded in the ground, and exposed to the enemy's fire, that they were abandoned."

This was indeed disastrous news, as it might give the insurgents courage to renew their attempts on Shanghai, and put the Allies to the expense and trouble of another campaign. As Major Gordon elicited further information from stragglers who came into his camp on their way to Soong-kiang, the head-quarters of the force, he concluded that the defeat resulted from want of generalship on the part of the commander, who had no skill in handling a large body of troops. He ascertained, also, that there was a falling-off in strict discipline among the force since they were commanded by Ward.

While he was cogitating upon the effects this unfortunate repulse was likely to produce, a mounted orderly rode up to his tent. "A despatch from the general, sir," he said, as he dismounted and opened his letter-bag, producing the document; "and I am to wait for an answer."

"Go round to the mess-tent, orderly, and have some refreshment, after your long ride; and tell my servant to give your horse a good feed."

As he anticipated, it was a despatch ordering his attendance at head-quarters without delay, to consult about his at once taking command of the disciplined Chinese force. He wrote in reply that he would leave for Shanghai on the morrow, as soon as he made arrangements with the lieutenants under his command to continue the survey in his absence. As these officers came in from the field with their men and instruments, after the labours of the day were over, he informed them of all that had transpired. They regretted his departure, but promised to continue the survey with assiduity.

"I am confident, gentlemen, that you will do so; but we shall not be far apart, should I make a successful campaign across the frontier, for we can increase the area of the plan as we extend the line of march. I must, however, have you, Sergeant Cameron, with me, to communicate where the survey is to be prosecuted."

I was called into the major's tent, and asked if I would volunteer to enter the Chinese service under my superior officer, and I did so most willingly, for I never served under any one for whom I had a higher respect.

"As to the status of volunteers," Gordon remarked to a number of applicants, "we, who are in Her Majesty's service do not lose our position in the British army while

serving in this Anglo-Chinese legion. We are only lent, as it were, to the Emperor of China to aid in suppressing this rebellion, which is equally damaging to our interests here as it is to that of his own subjects. But beyond these considerations I take up arms against these Taipings in the cause of humanity, that their destructive, sanguinary progress may soon come to an end, and the suffering industrious inhabitants who have survived their frightful massacres may be enabled to return to their avocations; while, as a Christian soldier, I shall consider that I am fighting the good fight of faith, in crushing this hideous monster, that impiously usurps a divine origin coeval with our religion."

These sentiments were approved of by his hearers, including most of the sappers and miners who had clustered round the tent, and the murmur of approbation was expressed by all of them as they retired to their quarters. Now this expression of his views in taking a temporary command in the Imperial military service, was no specious plea to excuse his future conduct in warring against these so-called Christian rebels. Major Gordon was a man of a pious and humane disposition, sensitive in the highest degree to the dictates of honour and chivalry, and deemed, that in the hands of Providence, he would be doing good in his day and generation in assisting to restore peace and prosperity to a distracted country. As the sequel will show, he did not over-estimate his self-confidence in leading on to success the "Ever Victorious Army."

When it became known among the officers of the infantry regiments quartered at Shanghai that Gordon had taken command of the disciplined Chinese corps, several of them volunteered to accept commissions under him, thereby evincing their high opinion of his military abilities. These

were accepted, as there were many of the old officers appointed by Ward and Burgevine who knew very little of their duties, and otherwise were of indifferent character. As they took rank in the Chinese army equivalent to those of colonel, major, and captain, with corresponding pay, it was necessary that the leader should have higher rank. Accordingly, Major Gordon was gazetted as a "general of division in the Imperial service," and I, as his aide-de-camp, ranked as captain.

After these appointments were made, we lost no time in proceeding to Soong-kiang, the head-quarters of the force. On a careful inspection it was found that they mustered about three thousand five hundred strong, including five batteries of artillery, each with six field-pieces. But they were not in an efficient state, from want of active service on the one hand, and on the other from the attempts of incompetent mandarins to manage them, who created much discontent and insubordination by neglecting to let them have their pay when it was due. These evils were quickly remedied by General Gordon, who displayed great tact and decision in dealing with the native authorities, acknowledging no superior but Lee Hoong-chang, the governor of the province; and as they came into contact with him, they learned to respect, and some to dread, the fearless foreigner who detested their proclivities to corruption and treachery.

Without delay he took the field, and struck out an entirely new plan of military operations from that pursued by his predecessors, which proved in the end to be most successful.

A mere summary of that brilliant campaign would fill many chapters. Instead of marching by land to the seat of war across the boundary line, the army was conveyed by

water up the estuary of the Yang-tsze, to a point where a wide creek led into the very heart of the country around Soochow, occupied by the enemy. The first operation of General Gordon was the relief of Chang-za, a considerable walled town built on the slope of a hill, and commanding an extensive view of the country from its heights. It contained a crowded population who had fled to it for refuge from the surrounding villages; and at one time the authorities and inhabitants had to become Taipings in order to save the place from destruction. However, when they saw the approach of a relieving force, they closed their gates against the rebels, who closely invested the city. Then they suffered from famine, having no animal food, and only a scanty supply of rice. They were likewise out of ammunition, and were unable to take any offensive measures against the besiegers, depending on the stout walls of the city for their defence. Great delight was manifested on the arrival of Gordon's force, and the defeat of their assailants. The gates were opened wide for their entrance, and the general was received with great honour by the authorities in their official robes, and by crowds of the rejoicing inhabitants.

Several other successful engagements followed this, the most important being the capture of Tai-tsang, where the disciplined force had been defeated. This proved to be one of the toughest encounters with the enemy, as the place was garrisoned by ten thousand men, of whom one-fifth were veteran soldiers. There were also a number of foreigners in the place as artillery officers. It was captured, however, but at a heavy loss to the disciplined force, while the English officer bravely leading the storming party was killed in the breach.

Besides the land force brought into the field in these

engagements, Gordon saw, with his astute mind, that in a region so intersected with navigable channels for vessels of light draught, it would be advantageous to bring up a small armed steamer. Accordingly he obtained one, and found it an excellent auxiliary force. By putting on board 300 riflemen and some field artillery, he was enabled to do great execution, to the surprise of the foe. But what astonished the enemy even more was the extraordinary rapidity of his movements with the attacking force from one point to another. Hitherto it was the practice on both sides for the combatants to rest on their arms for several days after an engagement before another was commenced. Now each success was followed up by the immediate advance of the victorious troops, who carried everything before them. The Taipings saw at once that they had a different foreign general to deal with to any previously brought against them, and his name was mentioned with dread throughout their ranks.

The most gallant exploit of this little man-of-war, which was named "Hyson"—a peaceful cognomen suggestive of tea—was before the capture of Quin-san, the chief strategical point at the seat of war. To reach this place it was necessary to make a detour through the country held by the enemy for a distance of twenty miles. She had not proceeded far on her route, when a large body of Taipings was met, marching to reinforce Quin-san. Immediately the artillerymen and riflemen opened fire with deadly effect, to the surprise of the enemy, who had no other alternative but to retreat along the banks of the canal. The steamer followed the retreating mass at slow speed, driving the enemy in all directions. In her progress she came to a stone bridge where fears were entertained that she could not pass through. Fortunately its arch was sufficiently high for the funnel to go under, and

the gallant little war steamer went along safely under easy speed. On each side of the canal, at intervals, stockades and strong stone forts had been erected. As the "Hyson" approached these, they were evacuated on a few shots being fired into them, and the fugitives pursued. In this manner many strong posts were silenced, and their armaments destroyed, until General Gordon and his gallant companions actually steamed up close to the walls of Soochow, and returned during the night in safety to the army encamped near Quin-san.

This unexpected appearance of an armed steamer moving with unexampled celerity through the country created a complete panic amongst the rebels; while the villagers, who had suffered severely from the devastation of their farms, now rejoiced at their deliverance from the Taiping yoke. The garrison of Quin-san at last surrendered, of whom about two thousand were fine young men who had been pressed to join the movement on pain of death. In this and similar cases of prisoners captured, General Gordon made it a *sine quâ non* with the Imperial generals that they must not be cruelly punished according to the barbarous practice of Chinese warfare, but that they should be dealt with as having surrendered to a British officer. This is an important point for consideration by those who might consider Gordon's services under the Chinese authorities as a servile obedience to their behests; for, as will be seen presently, a breach of this condition was the cause of his first throwing up the command. Not only did this magnanimous officer show his humanity on such occasions, but he repelled the insinuations that he was merely a mercenary soldier by refusing a large money reward for his services offered by the Government beyond his legitimate pay.

These honourable features in the character and conduct of General Gordon were exemplified at the siege of Soochow and the surrender of its garrison. By this time his armed force afloat was augmented into a flotilla of two steam gun-vessels and sixty Chinese boats armed with small brass guns. His land force was increased also, to about four thousand disciplined troops, assisted by double that number of undisciplined Imperialists commanded by General Ching. On the other hand, the Taipings had an addition to their foreign auxiliaries, under the American Burgevine, who had joined the rebels with an armed steamer, which he and his companions had stolen from an Imperial arsenal. At the first engagement between these mixed forces Gordon was victorious, and the foreign renegades intimated their intention to surrender if he would guarantee their safe conduct to Shanghai. With his usual generosity he agreed to this, and his fallen predecessor arrived safely at the settlement, where he was tried by the United States' Consul-General, and sentenced to be deported from China.

It was now evident to the Taiping leaders in Soochow that the capture of the city by Gordon and his "Ever-Victorious Army" was only a question of time, so they counselled together as to the best terms on which they should surrender. Among the five Wangs there was one who dissented from the course, namely, the Mo Wang, who was determined to hold out to the last. Nevertheless, his colleagues opened negotiations with Gordon and the Chinese general, and the former had an interview with Na Wang, who had been the first to propose capitulation. He told him that he wanted to make the Taipings and Imperialists friends, so that the shedding of blood should cease; and that since the rise of the rebellion the latter did

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"This alarms me greatly," I remarked in an agitated voice.

"Now, honourable sir," I said, "I know who that lady is. I take great interest in her, and would protect her from all harm. If you can aid me in doing so, I shall be much beholden to you, and may do good to you in return if you will undertake to deliver this missive to her."

Saying this, I tore a leaf out of my note book, on which I wrote my name, and a few words informing her that her father was safe, while I was at hand to succour should misfortune befall her.





CHAPTER XXXV.

Soochow in a state of anarchy.—The Mo Wang refuses to surrender.—A-Lee implores him to do so.—He refuses and goes to the Council of War.—He is assassinated by a colleague.—Cut-sing rushes to his palace and tells the tale.—A-Lee joyfully receives a letter from me.—Cut-sing avows his intention of seizing her as his prize.—She repels his advances.—She is saved by my entrance at the head of my company of disciplined men.—Our happy re-union.—Foong Cut-sing made prisoner.

INSIDE the city of Soochow a state of anarchy prevailed. There was not only a division in the council of the Taiping chiefs, but their followers were divided into old adherents, chiefly southern men, and new recruits from the north. The former were resolved to hold out to the last, and the latter were anxious to surrender. They were altogether about thirty thousand strong, the greater number being in favour of capitulation. The minority, under the leadership of the Mo Wang, vehemently cried "No surrender!"

It may be supposed that the household of that chief, including A-Lee, was, under the circumstances, in a state of fear and tribulation. In vain did the ladies try to persuade him to agree with his colleagues to yield up the city and save it from the horrors of bloodshed and famine.

"Why should I yield?" he exclaimed; "are not my men

braver and more numerous than the enemy? We can not only defend the city, but rush out of the gates and drive them before us into the sea. Besides, here I have you, my family, and all my property, and even if we were permitted to leave and dwell somewhere in safety, we would be beggars and outcasts the rest of our days. Better to die here than starve elsewhere!"

"But oh! your excellency," interposed A-Lee, pleading with him against what she thought a desperate resolution, in the name of her companions, "what then would become of your wife and daughters, if you, their protector, were gone? I have a father who has perhaps fallen in sacrifice in your cause, and but for your kind protection I should now have been destitute. Consider this matter, and if you can make an honourable surrender, then may you, your family and home, continue to be safe. You tell us that there is a foreign general of great renown in command of the victorious army, and that he will see to the safety of those who return to their allegiance. If so, I know these brave strangers to be true to their word, and men who would protect the poorest woman or child from harm."

"I know that, my child," he continued, in a calmer tone of voice; "and if I had only the foreign general to treat with, I would order my men to cut their long hair at once, and wear white turbans, in token of submission. But I have to deal also with treacherous mandarins, who will promise any terms so as to get me into their power, and then they would have no mercy upon me. I am now going to the grand council, where this question is to be decided, and will try to bring over the majority of chiefs to my views."

After saying this he quitted the females' apartments, and in

a commanding voice called on Foong Cut-sing to see that his trusty body-guard were in attendance to escort him to the council-chamber. The emissary promptly executed his orders, and the party, all mounted and well armed, sallied forth from the Mo Wang's palace.

The female inmates remained in great suspense for the return of their lord and master. They had no apprehension of danger to his person as long as he remained within the city walls. But he was a man of so courageous a disposition that they were afraid he would make an attempt to break through the enemy's lines outside and perish in the fight. Already several sorties had been made from the gates, in which he had taken part, but they were driven back with great loss. On the last of these occasions it was the intention of his colleagues that when he was outside they would close the gate of the city and prevent his re-entering, so that they might have their own way in treating for a capitulation, while he was to be made a prisoner by the disciplined corps. This treacherous plan was frustrated by a skilful retreat with his men through the gate before the other Wangs had time themselves to get in.

While the members of the household were discussing these matters, Foong Cut-sing suddenly rushed in amongst them with looks expressive of fear and alarm.

"All is lost!" he cried, in a voice of terror that pierced the hearts of his timid hearers; "the Mo Wang has been assassinated!"

"Ah, woe is me!" uttered his disconsolate wife, in tones of anguish. "I dreaded this. How did it happen, and who did the accursed deed?"

"All the chiefs were assembled in the council-hall with their robes of office on; five Wangs as grand councillors,

and twenty-five Tien Chuangs as ordinary councillors, the Mo Wang being president. The question of surrender was brought before the council by the Kan Wang, who said that he and the Na Wang had been negotiating with the foreign and Chinese generals, who assured them that their lives would be spared if they abandoned the Taiping cause and gave in their allegiance to the emperor. He was of opinion that the terms should be accepted, as he had great faith in the power and clemency of the foreign general. Then up rose the Mo Wang, who denounced the proposal to capitulate on any terms as pusillanimous, and not in accordance with the brave veteran Taipings who had marched from the south to the north of China as conquerors. Then he made a long discourse, in which he praised the superiority and faithfulness of the Cantonese and Quang-see men, saying that the followers from the other provinces were neither brave nor trustworthy. These insinuations caused the other Wangs to resent the affront in strong language, and an angry altercation took place, which grew hotter and hotter, until the chamber was in an uproar. Then the Kan Wang stood up, divested himself of his robe, and from underneath his vestment drew a sharp dagger, which he plunged into the heart of Mo Wang, who fell instantly dead upon the ground. One of the Tien Chuangs then drew his scimitar, and with it separated the head from the body. The council then resolved that the garrison should surrender, and our lamented master's head was sent to General Ching as a proof that they were ready to capitulate."

"What shall we do?—what shall we do?" groaned the bereaved family.

"Say, faithful follower of my dead husband," uttered the

mother, addressing Foong Cut-sing, "what would you advise us desolate females to do?"

"I see no other way of safety for you than to take flight with what articles of value can be conveniently carried. I will accompany you, your family, and A-Lee to a place of safety, until an opportunity occurs to leave this part of the country and we can travel to Canton."

While the emissary was making this reply there was a noise outside the female apartments which arrested his attention, so he turned to see what occasioned it. A Taiping soldier entered unceremoniously, and asked if a lady named A-Lee was in the palace. "I have a missive here to deliver personally to her. I am a messenger from the Na Wang, who received it from a foreign officer of the 'Ever-Victorious Army,' with whom we are now on friendly terms; and here it is," said he, handing in my note.

A scream of surprise and delight came from the lips of Loo A-Lee when she read its brief contents. Without noticing the effect upon Cut-sing of this strange interruption, she addressed her lady friends in encouraging words, saying, "Do not fear for your safety here. Remain in the palace; there is a brave foreign officer outside the walls who will come and protect us when the city surrenders to his men. Is it not so?" she said, turning to the messenger.

"Fair lady," he answered, "such will be the case when the terms are concluded, which we expect may be done tomorrow, or perhaps this very day."

When the messenger departed the ladies congratulated themselves on the prospect of remaining with safety in their abode. These congratulations, however, were disagreeably interrupted by the sinister remarks of the emissary, who abruptly addressed A-Lee. "Nay, fair lady," he said, with

an assumed blandness of manner that did not accord with the malicious grin on his countenance, "you reckon too much upon your security here, for when the besiegers enter the city they will plunder the palace, and you will not be safe. Besides, I have made up my mind to have you as my prize when I give in my allegiance to the Imperialists."

"False traitor, begone!" she replied, with a voice and gesture of indignation. "Who are you that dare to speak in this manner to me? Know you not that I am affianced to that noble foreign soldier who is now at hand to succour me in my distress. He has already saved me from danger, and I know he will do so again."

The eyes of the emissary glared with a fierce expression, and he laid hold of his dagger as if about to avenge his disappointment and jealousy by an act of violence.

The ladies set up wild screams, which brought in some faithful servitors who had been listening to the altercation at the door. Cut-sing turned upon them in still wilder anger, and struck furiously at the first comer, but they overpowered him by numbers, and succeeded in disarming the miscreant and pinioning his arms.

Immediately a great commotion was heard outside the palace, with the firing of musketry. Then the messenger who had just left rushed in, saying that the "Ever-Victorious Army" was marching towards the building. He had scarcely finished giving the information when the steady tramp of disciplined soldiers was heard in the vestibule, and they grounded their arms as a voice called out "Halt!"

In another instant I entered, sword in hand. A-Lee sprang from the corner where she and her affrighted friends had cowered before the bloodthirsty emissary, and with one bound she fell into my arms, uttering, with joyous exclaima-

tion, "I knew my faithful Ca-me-la would come and save me. Now I am happy," and tears of joy coursed down her cheeks.

I took in the situation at a glance, and concluded that the pinioned emissary was the cause of the confusion. The culprit stood with a sullen aspect, scarcely daring to lift his eyes from the ground, but to prevent him from doing any harm, I put him at once under a guard of my own men, with handcuffs on his wrists, and marched him away to the camp.





CHAPTER XXXVI.

I obtain permission to escort Loo A-Lee to Shanghai.—Great commotion among the Imperialists.—General Ching gives evasive answers to Gordon.—Massacre of the Taiping Chiefs.—Sacking of their Palaces.—Gordon, disgusted with the treachery of the Imperialists, retires from Soochow.—I proceed to Shanghai.—People recovering from anarchy.—Loo A-Lee betrothed to me by her father.—Sunday in Shanghai.—Protestant and Catholic Churches.

AFTER I had seen to the protection of Loo A-Lee and her female friends, I went in search of General Gordon for orders regarding the disposal of the disciplined force, and to obtain permission to escort my precious charge to Shanghai. I found him outside the East Gate of the city, near General Ching's camp, and a stockade where the Governor Lee Hoong-chang, had his head-quarters. Gordon informed me, as everything seemed to be progressing satisfactorily between the Taiping chiefs and the mandarins, he saw no necessity for keeping his force before the walls of Soochow, and had ordered them back to Quin-san, excepting his body-guard and the two armed steamers. So that I could march on the morrow with my company for the same destination; and as it was about half way to Shanghai by water carriage, I could have a boat for the accommodation of myself and friends.

"Many thanks for your kindness, general," was my response, whilst in imagination I saw happy prospects before me, in restoring A-Lee to her father and afterwards making her my wife. "I can assure you that I love and esteem this Chinese lady—who is a sincere Christian convert—and hope to be soon united to her in the holy bonds of matrimony."

"I know your intentions are honourable, Captain Cameron," said he, grasping my hand; "otherwise I would not give you the slightest encouragement in carrying out your views. I hope that this campaign may shortly come to a close, and that both of us may live to see (*Deo volente*) the restoration of peace to this distracted land, in which we may be humble instruments under Providence in bringing it about. But what means all this commotion," he said, abruptly breaking off his friendly converse. "Let us go and see."

We had not gone far when a great force of Imperialist soldiery went rushing through the gate into the city, firing off their muskets in the air, and yelling as they usually do when they enter a vacated stockade. On reaching the camp Gordon remonstrated with the mandarins and soldiers, as their conduct was calculated to frighten the rebels and cause them to create a disturbance. After a few minutes General Ching appeared on the scene, looking pale and agitated.

Gordon addressed him sharply, asking, "Was the interview between the rebel chiefs and the governor satisfactory, and is the ceremony of submission over?"

"Your excellency," replied the treacherous general, "they have not seen Governor Lee."

"That is strange, for I saw them in the city with some

twenty attendants, all mounted, proceeding towards the East Gate on their way to the governor's camp. How was it, then, that they did not see him?"

The lying mandarin said he did not know, but supposed that they had run away. He also made some other excuses and statements which Gordon could see were all subterfuges, and he was impressed with the conviction that something serious had befallen the insurgent Wangs, who themselves had been accessory to the assassination of their chief colleague. Now, as the general had given his word for their safety, and had relied upon the faith of the governor, who had written to his Government that mercy would be extended to these men on giving in their allegiance, he felt his honour involved in the matter.

Accordingly we rode into the city to see if the Na Wang was in his palace, and to learn the true state of affairs. The streets were full of rebels standing to their arms, while bands of Imperialist soldiers were plundering the houses. When we reached the Na Wang's palace we found it ransacked, and there met the uncle of the chief, who begged us to come to protect his house. Night was far advanced, and from the alarming appearance of affairs we were apprehensive of a general massacre in the city. I was ordered to bring my men who were left on guard at the Mo Wang's palace to the governor's stockade to await the arrival of the two armed steamers, and I rode in hot haste, fearful that the plundering Imperialists had reached that quarter of the city. Such, fortunately, was not the case, but the whole household were in a great state of alarm, and were sitting up anxiously awaiting my expected return. There was no time to be lost; the general's orders had to be promptly obeyed, and preparations were immediately

made for the departure of the female household with Loo A-Lee.

My own men could hardly be kept in hand, and were loudly grumbling because they were not allowed to join the plunderers; so, making a virtue of necessity, I proposed to the Mo Wang's wife that, as the palace was sure to be plundered, it would be just as well to let it be ransacked at once, after the family had selected what articles they could conveniently take with them. The proposal was agreed to by the forlorn widow, as she was perfectly helpless in the matter, and so the allegiance of my company was maintained.

All was bustle in the well-furnished rooms during the remainder of the night, and before day-break they were pretty well gutted. Sedan-chairs were got for the ladies, and the old servitors willingly volunteered as bearers. They then left with their escort, each man pretty well laden with spoil, which put them all in good humour. As they marched through the streets they passed through lines of rebels busily occupied in shaving each others heads, and wearing white turbans in token of their submission. Although most of them were armed with muskets, yet there was no collision between them and the Imperialist soldiers, who were allowed to proceed in their work of plunder without molestation.

It was barely daylight when our party got out of the city and arrived at the governor's stockade, where General Gordon was waiting for the armed steamers. While we were conversing, Major Bailey, who commanded the artillery in General Ching's army, came up to Gordon and informed him that the four Taiping Wangs had been beheaded. He also said that the general was very much

put out about the affair, and had sent him to say that he was not responsible for the act, that Governor Lee Hoong-chang had ordered General Ching to execute the rebel chiefs, and also gave permission to the troops to plunder the city. The major further stated that he had the Na Wang's son at his quarters, and he afterwards brought him up.

The young man was in great distress as he pointed to the opposite side of the creek, saying that his father and the other Wangs had been beheaded there. Some of us then crossed over in a boat to examine the place, and saw the bodies fearfully gashed and cut down the middle. It appeared that the chiefs, on reaching the camp, were received with friendly demonstrations by the governor and General Ching, and that while conversing with them the executioners suddenly rushed forward and decapitated these victims of treachery. Gordon heard also that there were some inferior rebel chiefs still in custody, and he determined to see the governor at once, so as to induce him not to put them to death. He had, however, already gone into the city, so he sent a letter to him on the subject.

By this time one of the steamers came up, and General Gordon, seeing that he could do no more in this sanguinary affair, took his departure for Quin-san. On the voyage we discussed this cold-blooded act of treachery, and Gordon announced his resolve to resign his command of the disciplined force and to quit the Chinese service. As it would be injudicious, however, to do so precipitately, he wrote dispatches to the British general at Shanghai and the minister at Peking, giving a detailed account of the affair as far as what came under his own observation, and intimating his desire to give up the command. I accompanied the party

which carried these dispatches in the steamer to Shanghai, to the no small delight of Loo A-Lee and her less fortunate female companions, who were able to accompany us.

Already numbers of the fugitive inhabitants of Shanghai had returned to their desolated homes, and were industriously employed in restoring them to a habitable condition.



TEA FACTORY.

The tea factories were again in operation; drying it in kilns, and re-packing in chests for exportation from that great emporium to England. The farmers and farm labourers were out in the fields tilling the soil. In the towns and villages, also, there were signs of activity in rebuilding the dilapidated dwellings; and though there were shadows of

sadness in the picture of recovery, yet it was relieved by the lights of cheerfulness with which the peasants went through their tasks. Even those families that were seen trudging along the paths to their deserted houses chatted merrily on the way; while the little children, slung in baskets on poles



FOOT SHUTTLECOCK PLAYING.

over their fathers' shoulders, laughed and clapped their hands with glee.

Here and there were seen, also, in the small villages, happy youths resuming their pastimes, where they were no longer scared by the cry that "the *Chang-maous* (long-haired

rebels) are coming." Of their games, one of the favourites is playing at shuttlecock, not however, striking the feathered cork with battledoors, but with the feet, as shown in the illustration.

These indications of a natural buoyancy of disposition and love of industry in the character of the rural Chinese, I had observed before, and was at a loss to account for such among a heathen people, who had not the light of the gospel before their eyes to teach them the duties of resignation and hope in time of trouble. It is true that these are inculcated in the *Analects of Confucius*; but they have not the seal of divine origin impressed on them. Yet with these alone to guide them, this long-suffering people are most resigned in adversity, and buoyant in a high degree at the approach of prosperity.

Such reflections naturally led my thoughts back to the time when I found Loo A-Lee's father in the depths of misery at the Bubbling Well Temple. I did not give her the details of having rescued her father from that den of wretchedness, leaving to him to communicate what he thought best about the matter.

Happy was the meeting of parent and child, whom I left alone to commune with each other and talk over the thrilling incidents that had happened since they last parted. Among foreigners generally, who have but a superficial knowledge of Chinese character, there is an impression that they do not entertain those tender affections and sentiments towards each other which are so highly prized among Europeans. In their social intercourse they are supposed to be callous and devoid of feeling. Such are erroneous conclusions. Those who have been resident in China, and made it their business to study native character, can vouch

for the affection and sincerity that exist throughout all the family relations. Indeed, it may be said that in some respects they will compare favourably with those of the most enlightened people in Europe. It is true there are differences in the mode of manifesting their joys and sorrows, but at the bottom human nature is the same in the far east as it is in the far west.

In the examples here given of parental affection on the one hand and filial duty on the other, it is only justice to say that they are typical of what exists in China. But we must add that being Christian converts, these relations were rendered holier by the influence of religion. Accordingly, after they had exchanged accounts of what had befallen them (of which the reader is already aware), father and daughter knelt beside each other and sent up a prayer of thanksgiving to God for having vouchsafed their happy reunion, after having passed through so many dangers and trials.

Next to fulfilling that sacred duty, both of them instinctively felt that they were called upon to tender feelings of gratitude to their deliverer from so much misery. The reader will conclude that these feelings were intensified in the bosom of the daughter by the tender passion she felt for me.

"Yes! dearest father," she said with emotion, "to the brave and generous Ca-me-la we owe our safety in this refuge of his victorious countrymen. Let us thank him for what he has done in our behalf." Saying which she went into the adjoining apartment, where I was waiting the conclusion of their interview; and taking my hand with maiden modesty led me into the presence of her father.

Meng-kee rose upon our entrance and grasped my other hand in both of his, ejaculating in fervid tones, "may the Almighty reward you for all the good you have done to my

daughter and myself, for I have it not in my power to give you material compensation for one-hundredth part of what we are indebted to you."

"Say not so my worthy friend," I responded in a joyous voice, "you are rich beyond compare in the possession of a gem of womanhood, whose beauty and virtues are priceless. If you consider that my poor services to you and her are entitled to so valuable a consideration, then I ask you to bestow upon me this hand as that of my wedded wife, whom I shall cherish and protect to the last day of my life. What say you, my pearl of beauty?" I concluded, turning to A-Lee with open arms.

"My brave and noble Ca-me-la," she said, embracing me, "you know well that both my hand and heart are yours for evermore. Until I met you I never knew what the feelings of true love were, and if I become your wife I shall devote my days to studying how I can best add to your happiness. Father," she added, addressing Meng-kee, "though it would grieve me to be separated from you, yet would I follow my true-hearted lover to the uttermost parts of the earth, if duty called him from our distracted land to his more peaceful islands across the wide oceans that lie between us and the lands of the west."

"Spoken like a daughter in Jesus, who will cling to her Christian husband in weal or in woe. What can I say my beloved children, but to give you a father's blessing and wish you happiness and prosperity," wherewith he joined our hands and we knelt at his feet while he pronounced a heavenly benediction on us.

That night was spent in a joyous but tranquil state of happiness, and we resolved to have a pleasant little feast on the occasion, of which the disconsolate Taiping ladies

were invited to partake. As Meng-kee lived in a house not far from the British Consulate, he sent his servant to that establishment and got some assistance to prepare the feast. The viands were obtained from a native restaurateur's for the Chinese guests, but they were supplemented by a liberal allowance from the Consular kitchen, for my use. These were kindly sent by the Consul, on my having delivered Gordon's dispatches, and after giving him all the information I could regarding their contents.

Next day being Sabbath, we had arranged the night previous to attend one of the missionary chapels in the settlement. It was with no small delight that I listened to the church-bells as they pealed sonorously over land and water. The sun shone brightly while we walked along the "Bund," or marine parade, and everywhere observed signs that it was strictly kept as a day of rest, not only by the foreign community, but by their native employés. Every "hong," or place of business, was closed, and their occupants thronged the narrow roads on their way to church. Numerous were the flags of foreign nations that fluttered in the breeze. Among the palatial residences that face the river, the ensigns of fifteen different nationalities indicated the various Consulates in the place, and the motley character of the community. In like manner the foreign shipping displayed the bunting of every Western maritime nation, while all traffic with the shore was suspended.

Everywhere the utmost decorum prevailed, and excepting the number of Chinese seen, there was not much difference between the quiet aspect of the place, and that of any seaport in England on a Sunday. I was most favourably impressed with all I saw, and thought that those who said "Shanghai is a sink of iniquity," must be either grossly mistaken or

libellous in making the assertion. My impressions were further agreeably confirmed after listening to the sermon of an esteemed English missionary, and witnessing what the ladies of the missions were doing to educate "the daughters of China," and bring them up in the faith of Christ.

In the small chapel the pews were divided off for the foreigners in one part, and the natives in the other. Here the party separated accordingly, and I saw how earnest the Chinese portion of the congregation were in their devotions. They were chiefly young females belonging to a seminary under the charge of a lady missionary devoted to her charge. Many of them were dressed in European clothes, and all of them joined in singing the psalms and hymns in English. It was heavenly to hear the voices of these girls joining in the praises of the true God, who otherwise might have been listening to the heathen chants of Buddhist priests.

On enquiry after the service was over, I ascertained that these were the scholars from a society recently instituted for the education of Chinese females. They were chiefly taught to study the scriptures from translations by the Protestant missionaries, so as to acquire an intelligent understanding of what they read. They were also taught the duties of household work, including sewing, washing, and cooking. Three of the most promising were learning to read English, and four were being taught the rudiments of music, so that they might become qualified for conducting the singing in the chapel. The expense of maintenance was contributed chiefly by the foreign lady residents.

In the afternoon Meng-kee and I went to visit the largest establishment in Shanghai for the conversion and training of children in christian doctrines. This was Tong-ka-doo.

situated in the suburbs of the native city, near the Eastern Gate, and instituted many years ago by the Roman Catholic Propaganda in China. We were surprised to see the magnitude of this establishment compared with the modest proportions of the Protestant Mission we had just left. Here was a cathedral capable of accommodating a congregation of between two and three thousand, with cloisters attached, and offices like a French monastery. There were some thirty priests—French, Italian, and Spanish—with a bishop. What surprised us was that they were all dressed as Chinese, with the long plaited queue, long silk robes, and satin shoes entire. Indeed they were of such dark complexions and black hair, that we thought at first they really were Chinese. It was by the eyes we could distinguish them to be Europeans. Not only was it odd to see their exact copy of the native dress, but it was curious to observe the acolytes, who were Chinese youths, going through the ceremonies at the altar. Then the priests performed their genuflexions to the images, pictures, and candles, before a crowded church, while one of them performed upon an organ having pipes of bamboo, which sounded grandly. The whole scene was so incongruous, that it was difficult to imagine it a church dedicated to the service of the christian religion. It looked like an amalgamation of Romanism and Buddhism, and indeed it may be considered so, for there is such a similarity between the forms and ceremonies of the two creeds, that there are grounds for supposing the one must have copied from the other. This, no doubt, is the reason that the Propagandists make so many converts, or at least followers of their creed, as the converts have only to change their ceremonies from the mysteries of Buddha to those of the Romish dogmas.



CHAPTER XXXVII.

Grand Festival at Shanghai among the Soochow Refugees.—Scenes at the City Temple.—Travelling Tinker.—Juggler and Musicians.—Peripatetic Barbers.—Itinerant Story-teller.—Shanghai Tea Gardens.—Artificial Hill and Lake.—Grand Procession of the Golden Dragon.—The Gardens illuminated.—Fireworks on the water.

GREAT were the rejoicings of the refugees in Shanghai city and settlement at the surrender of Soochow, for they had chiefly come from that town and its neighbourhood, and their satisfaction took a tangible shape in contributions from their hoards of sycee silver, to cover the expenses of an appropriate festival on the occasion. A day was set aside for that purpose and kept as a general holiday.

First we went to the city temple, and mingled with the crowd collected in the courtyard and on the steps leading to the entrance. Here were gathered together examples of all the itinerant hucksters, traders, and others that characterize street-life in China. There were groups of pipe-sellers with bundles of brass pipes, tea dealers with small boxes of the leaves slung over their shoulders, and occasionally a tinker pulling at his long bellows, repairing some article from a bystander, as shown in the illustration. Some of these were similar to what may be seen in England, such as cake and fruit vendors, but there were others which



TRAVELLING TINKER.

belong peculiarly to that strange country. Of these, the most numerous were the peripatetic barbers, who shave the heads of their customers, and dress their hair in the open streets when the weather is fair, or beneath the eaves of the houses when it rains, or under the protection of a large bamboo umbrella. When it is considered that there are probably not less than one hundred and fifty millions of



JUGGLER.

male heads throughout the empire requiring a weekly tonsorial manipulation, some idea may be formed of the immense number who follow this trade. As the Taiping revolution had for one of its chief objects the discontinuance of shaving the head, the barbers were among its most inveterate opponents, for if it had succeeded their occupation would have been gone.

Besides vendors of wares and tradesmen, we saw jugglers balancing bowls on their heads, into which they threw chopsticks with great dexterity; tossed cups and balls or swallowed a sword down their gullets, as may be inferred from the annexed illustration, where the juggler is accompanied by a band of musicians. There were also diviners, who told fortunes by tossing up the "sticks of fate" from a kind of dice-box. The dupes gathered for themselves, or their parents, wives, or children, what would befall them in the dark future. Then there was a physiognomist who studied the characters of his customers by their features, to which he added a little fortune-telling by means of palmistry, the principles being defined in a book on these subjects amply illustrated. In a quiet corner of the spacious courtyard we came upon an itinerant story-teller, who was surrounded by a group of eager listeners while he related a sensational story, in which demons and fairies controlled the fates of the principal persons in the tale. He himself had a hobgoblin appearance, being dwarfish, with a large head, and a voice hollow and rough from constant speaking in the open air. Of a superior character was a peripatetic expounder of the books of Confucius, holding forth in an adjacent temple dedicated to that sage and lawgiver. Here the reader stood on an elevated rostrum, and delivered short sentences in a grave tone of voice to an attentive audience seated on forms, the hall being similar to an ordinary lecture-room in this country.

As the day advanced the crowds at these places moved away along the streets leading to the famous Shanghai gardens, where the grand show of the day was to assemble, and afterwards march in procession through the city and settlement. We followed the throng, and after some

crushing got within their precincts. Here all was stir and bustle, with an endless rattling of discordant sounds from musical instruments, every now and then varied by a discharge of fire-crackers and bombs. Meng-kee, who was well acquainted with the mazes of these gardens, led the way to a rocky eminence in a central position, from which we could see all that was going on without inconvenience.

This hill was entirely artificial, formed by a pile of stones so varied in their disposition that they seemed like rocks upheaved through the level land around, whereas every stone had been brought from many miles distant. Intricate paths wound round it in all directions, with caves here and there formed by boulders, as if worn out by time and the elements, and rough-hewn seats at various stages of the ascent, for people to sit down and admire the varying landscape. A general view of the gardens, and of the surrounding city, with the forest of masts from a thousand junks moored in the Wong-poo river, was obtained from the summit.

The scene in the foreground was eminently picturesque. Numerous pavilions on rocky heights and in small lakes were scattered about, presenting examples of nature and art combined that pleased the artistic eye with their quaintness of design. Of these, the largest stood in the central part of a serpentine lake, having only one approach by a zigzag bridge. Great care and skill had been expended on the carving of the pillars that supported its double roof with beautiful carved cornices.

An unpleasant scene in the crowd detracted from the general festive character of the gardens. This was a criminal under the punishment of the *kang*, or Chinese pillory. He was sitting on the ground, with his head and

right hand through the ignominious collar, on which his offence was written, but had to get up and walk with it at the bidding of an executioner's assistant, who guarded him, and proclaimed his crime to the assembled crowd.



PUNISHMENT OF THE KANG.

At first it was impossible to understand the nature of the festival, but at length, when the performers were brought into something like order, they marched in procession out of the gardens through the principal gate, where the spectators on the rocky eminence had a good view of them.

The procession was headed by flag-bearers carrying the usual banners and emblematical tableaux that form the staple of such performances. Among the latter was an English horse bedizened with a magnificently embroidered covering, and led by two gaily-dressed ostlers. Several ponies followed, on one of which rode a very diminutive youth dressed up as a mandarin in official robes. On another was a small boy made up for that uncomfortable black-faced and white-eyed character which usually represents the evil Chinese genius on the stage, and peculiarly diabolical he certainly looked. Then came a number of girls dressed in garments of the brightest hue, their faces painted with colours no less brilliant. They rode astride on their ponies, and some carried paint boxes, with looking-glasses attached, from which they took dabs of colours and put them on their faces from time to time. One part of the procession consisted of a number of half-naked children, another of equally lightly-clad men, and an imposing effect was produced by a goodly number of mandarins in purple robes with bright gilded shields. These were common men hired for the occasion, who seemed very happy in their imaginary dignity, though one could see that their gait lacked the official strut, and, indeed, in one or two instances, bore affinity to the jaunty swing of the chair-bearer, and suggested that if these mandarins were undressed the coolie would be revealed.

Between the different groups of equestrians and pedestrians, numerous gilded shrines having allegorical figures were borne aloft, with incense-sticks burning in front, and surrounded by all kinds of savoury viands and confections. The dresses of the ladies and the housings of the ponies seemed to produce a great sensation, especially where their

attendants carried richly-embroidered canopies of crimson cloth on bamboos above their heads. But the romantic display was somewhat detracted from by some of the fair damsels carrying foreign umbrellas, the utilitarian simplicity of which jarred with the oriental magnificence displayed. The music, it is needless to state, was of the usual discordant and noisy description.

The great feature of the procession came last : this was the "Kin-loong," or Golden Dragon, the emblem of all that is ancient and great in the history and dynasties of the empire. It is appropriated to whatever belongs to or issues from the "Dragon's Seat," as the Imperial throne is designated in the decrees of the Government. A five-clawed dragon is embroidered on the emperor's court robes, often surrounds his edicts and the title-pages of books published by his authority, while dragons are inscribed on his banners. It is more than anything else the national coat-of-arms of the Celestial Empire, because it is personated by his Imperial Majesty, and no subject can employ it to designate anything belonging to him personally. Yet, as on this occasion, the fabulous creature was allowed to be publicly represented, as a token of loyalty to the reigning dynasty and hatred to the enemies of the Dragon Throne.

The emblem carried in procession represented a monster of great magnitude, not less than one hundred and fifty feet long, with a head six feet in height, something like that of a camel, having the horns of a deer and the ears of a cow. The long body had a ridge of scales on the back, with the claws of a hawk. On each side of its mouth were whiskers, and a long beard hung under the chin. A cloud of smoke proceeded from its mouth, which sometimes changed into fire, while fireworks issued from the nostrils.



SHANGHAI GARDENS ILLUMINATED.

Altogether it was a most elaborately got-up affair, and was a striking evidence of the value the Chinese attach to old customs, the origin of which are hid in the antiquity of their mythology.

The festival did not end by daylight. As evening set in the City Gardens were illuminated by thousands of lanterns, varying in shape and colour, which were hung from the branches of the trees overhanging the lake, where their shadows were reflected on its smooth surface. In the distance we saw a grand dining hall brilliantly lighted up, and beyond towered a pagoda, with its tiers of windows lit, as seen in the illustration. When the chief inhabitants had partaken of the feast that had been prepared for them, they embarked on the river, on board gaily-decorated barges, illuminated with a profusion of lanterns inside and out. The night was still and weather fine, allowing the brilliant maritime procession to be seen to the best advantage. When it proceeded down the Wong-poo there were several long dragon-boats in the wake, constructed so as to imitate the form of that mythological creature, from whose mouths, eyes, and nostrils were emitted jets of smoke and fire. But what rendered the scene most brilliant were the fireworks discharged from these boats—not into the air as with us, but into the water, which, instead of lessening their brilliancy, seemed to increase it. This pyrotechnic display lasted for some time, during which the procession of boats kept moving up and down, with its fiery train hissing and sputtering on the water, giving a forcible representation of the monstrous “Golden Dragon” which the superstition of the Chinese places among the deified protectors of their country and legitimate monarch.



CHAPTER XXXVIII.

The Taipings not yet subdued.—The Chinese Government apprehensive.—They offer Gordon ten thousand taels, which he refuses, but accepts a high title.—The “Ever-Victorious Army” again in the field.—Parting between myself and Loo A-Lee.—Gordon leads his army to success.—Tien Wang, the head Taiping, poisons himself in despair.—The Imperialists capture Nanking.—Disbandment of the “Ever-Victorious Army.”—End of the Taiping Rebellion.—Remarks on that extraordinary movement.

IN consequence of the inactivity of the disciplined force, the Taipings again began to attack the Imperialists, and with better chances of success, for they were no longer aided by Gordon’s generalship. A greater number of foreigners than before flocked to the standard of rebellion. It was at once seen that if this renewal of the insurrection was not checked at the beginning, all the fortified places wrested from them would be recaptured, and that a great loss of foreign blood and treasure in defending Shanghai and its environs would be involved.

The Chinese Government were in great dread of another attack, and did all they could to pacify the general, by issuing the following decree:—“Gordon, specially appointed a General in the army of Kiang-soo, was in command of the troops who assisted in these operations (the reduction of Soochow); his Majesty, in order to evince his approval of

the profound skill and great zeal displayed by him, orders him to receive a military decoration of the first rank and a sum of ten thousand taels," (about £3,330). The reward he refused, as it would have appeared like accepting blood-money for countenancing a barbarous act of warfare abhorrent to every British soldier. He accepted the decoration of high rank, however, as it put him on a par with the highest mandarins in the province. So General Gordon once more assumed command of the "Ever-Victorious Army," and I took the field under him.

"Good-bye! my darling A-Lee." I said, after tenderly embracing my betrothed. "I may be longer absent than either you or I should wish; but I must do my duty whate'er betide, and you must learn to be resigned as a soldier's bride, when duty calls him into action."

"My beloved Ca-me-la," she responded, clinging to me, as if she would have gone with me to the field, "I shall study to do all that you bid me, and pray to God night and day to shield you from harm."

"Fear not my 'Pearl of Beauty,' as you are called in your poetic language, I shall return safe and sound ere long to claim you as my bride."

With some hesitation she said, "I know you like my native maiden name, but I should wish to change it into one of a Christian character, before mingling it with your surname in wedded bliss. I have spoken to my father about it, also to the good missionary, and they both agree that I should be received into the Protestant Church by the sacrament of baptism. Do you, my love, agree that it should take place also, and that during your absence at the wars; where, if you be taken from me, I should ever mourn for you as your betrothed Mary?"

A tear started to my eyes as she expressed herself in these sentiments of holy and enduring affection for me ; and in a last close embrace I whispered my assent in her ear, coupled with words of love and confidence. Then I hurried down to the landing place at the Soochow creek, where the armed steamer was ready to start with me and some brother officers for Quin-san. As I got on board I felt myself almost unmanned, at parting from her who had wound herself so completely round my heart. The stir on board, however, and the call of duty soon brought me to myself again, and it was with a buoyant step I sought the general's quarters after a speedy voyage to the encampment.

At this time the country in the hands of the remaining rebels resembled somewhat the form of an hour-glass, having the provincial city of Hang-chow at its eastern, and Nanking at its western extremity, with two fortified posts at the waist. The military genius of General Gordon enabled him to see at once that if he could capture these two posts, he would cut off the lines of communication between their bases of operation, and thereby weaken the concentrating force of the enemy. Then the Franco-Chinese disciplined corps could attack Hang-chow, and the Imperialists Nanking, with better prospects of extinguishing the rebellion than had ever before presented themselves.

Hitherto Gordon had no difficulty in obtaining commissariat supplies, as his base of operations was open to Shanghai, where unlimited stores could be obtained. In this part of the campaign he could not depend upon these resources, as he was marching his army into the heart of the rebel country ; consequently it was necessary for his men to carry sufficient provisions for their consumption in the field. Notwithstanding this extra incumbrance, and in

spite of most inclement weather, his force captured the posts, and carried all before them. The last of these was the strongly-fortified city of Lee-yang, where twenty thousand rebels surrendered themselves; and he took good care that none of them should be handed over to the tender mercies of Governor Lee. By this strategic success, the enemies forces were cut in two—the hour-glass was broken at the waist. Not only did it sever their communications, but it relieved fifteen thousand men of the Imperial army, under Tsen-kwo-fan (one of the greatest mandarins in China), who marched on to Nanking. Gordon followed up this success in the opposite direction, to co-operate with the Franco-Chinese, and was successful in every engagement, although the enemy fought with despairing energy and considerable military skill.

Such an instance occurred during the siege of Chang-chow. The disciplined force had arrived before the city, driving the rebels from the posts previously captured. They attacked twelve formidable stockades, and carried them with comparatively small loss. Next day the siege batteries were placed in position, and the artillery encamped in the trenches near their guns. In the night General Gordon rode with his staff to superintend the operations, and unfortunately, in the darkness, his own men mistook them for a reconnoitring party from the enemy, and fired on them. Most providentially the general escaped harmless, but one of his staff, Colonel Tapp, was killed on the spot, while several officers were seriously wounded, amongst others myself.

This untoward circumstance was followed up by a still heavier loss amongst his officers and men in an assault upon the city. On that occasion the storming party encountered such desperate resistance that it was compelled to retire,

after a severe struggle, with the loss of twenty-seven officers and three hundred men killed and wounded. The marvel is that General Gordon came almost scathless out of these desperate engagements, for, excepting a slight flesh wound on one occasion, he was never disabled, although he exposed himself to the enemy's fire as much as any of his officers. In the opinion of his men he led a charmed life, which excited in them a superstitious reverence for his person. This idea was also entertained by the Taipings, which, coupled with the rapidity and success of his movements, overwhelmed them with a kind of awe on his approach at the head of his troops.

After the repulse of his forces at the assault on Changchow, General Gordon set to work in making engineering approaches, by raising breastworks within eighty feet of its walls. When these were finished an attack was made simultaneously at two breaches in the south wall. A severe struggle ensued, but the rebels were overpowered and the city captured. It was evident that the Taipings were fighting with the courage of despair. Next to Nanking this city was their chief stronghold; its loss, therefore, was a severe blow to their failing strength.

Several other places were taken by both disciplined and undisciplined troops, until the ancient southern capital was the only important city under the rule of Taipingdom, which had been in possession of the Wangs for eleven years. The besieging force under Tsen-kwo-fan learned that the Tien Wang, seeing that his cause was lost, committed suicide by eating gold leaf. This caused them to push on their works, and an enormous mine, which had been run up to the north-east gate, was exploded, destroying about one hundred and twenty feet of wall, sixty feet high and forty

feet thick, by a discharge of sixty-eight thousand pounds of Chinese gunpowder. Through the breach the Imperialists rushed, and when they reached the Tien Wang's palace, they found his wives hanging on the trees in the garden, where his own body lay unburied.

By this time General Gordon had returned to Quin-san with his "Ever-Victorious Army," and seeing that there were no fears to be entertained from Taiping incursions, he prepared to disband the force. This was done in the most cautious manner, by ordering the men to deliver up their arms and accoutrements, with the exception of some batteries of artillery. So the disciplined Anglo-Chinese force, which had been mainly instrumental in recovering the province of Kiang-soo from the rebels, was broken up, and the British officers, connected with it returned to their respective regiments. This was in pursuance of an order in council after the account of the Soochow assassinations. Gordon shortly afterwards left for England, where his eminent services were acknowledged by her Majesty the Queen, in conferring upon him the honourable order of Companion of the Bath.

Thus was brought to a successful conclusion one of the most brilliant campaigns of modern warfare in the far East, in which British valour and generalship maintained its supremacy in the field. It may be contended that there was not much glory in overcoming these hordes of marauders; but, nevertheless, they exhibited as much skill and courage in defending their positions as the best native armies in India under their princes. Indeed, as far as mere fighting goes, they were superior to the Imperialist forces whom our troops encountered during the three wars in China; they fought for their existence, while their

opponents fought for pay. Had this campaign been one of foreign warfare, doubtless it would have had its numerous chroniclers, and high encomiums passed upon its gallant commander, which have been few and far between. But for his skill and perseverance, in all probability the Taiping rebellion would be still raging, and paralyzing the industry of the chief marts of China.

When glancing over the history of the rebellion I am almost at a loss to discover what it was that formed a bond of union between the heterogeneous elements that composed it. It cannot be believed that the followers of the rebel leaders were actuated by any pious zeal for the spread of that bastard Christianity which was at first professed. To the myriads of people who flocked to the insurgent standards, the overthrow of one dynasty and the establishment of another would be words without meaning. No personal love or admiration for the Tien Wang could have entered into their motives, for he was as shadowy and unapproachable as the legitimate emperor.

The answer to the question, Why the Taiping rebellion numbered so many millions of supporters? lies, I believe, in the fact that the common people of China, ground down by exactions, and kept in a degraded political condition, are at times liable to obtain a glimpse of their real position, and to speculate on the rights of man as a free agent and their claims to self-government. Once committed to the support of the rebellion, fear was sufficient to deter them from any attempt at escape. Should they cast off the new allegiance they had sworn their fate was sealed, and should they even throw themselves into the arms of the Imperialists, they had little to expect but punishment or death. Thus the only explanation which can be given of the long

continuance of the rebellion was the fear of punishment on one hand or the other. It was only towards its close that clemency prevailed with the Chinese Government, through the representations of the foreign powers, and caused the great body of the rebels to surrender and to give in their allegiance to the rightful ruler of their country.





CHAPTER XXXIX.

I return to Shanghai wounded.—Slow recovery, attended by Loo A-Lee.—Recovery and Marriage with the Mandarin's Daughter.—The Mandarin in Consular employ.—Conclusion.

AFTER being wounded before Chang-chow I was brought down to Shanghai, and for a long time hovered betwixt life and death. It was during the hot season, and had I not received the closest attention I should not be talking with you now. Fever set in, and both Meng-kee and Loo A-Lee thought my hours were numbered as I tossed restlessly on my couch and raved in delirium. When I recovered consciousness she was sitting by my side, pale and thin, and her face marked with lines of anxiety and fatigue. Still she would not give up her nightly vigils by the sick-bed of her betrothed.

My recovery was slow whilst the humid heat prevailed, but when it was over, and the bracing wind of the north-east monsoon set in, I rapidly gained strength. By this time the campaign was at an end, and my fellow-officers, including my kind-hearted commander, came to say good-bye before their departure from China for home. I should have gone with them had I been differently situated, for my time as a non-commissioned officer in the Engineers had expired; but my affections were intertwined with those of

the mandarin's daughter, her people became my people, and China the land of my adoption.

Whilst serving with the "Ever-Victorious Army" I had acquired far higher pay and rank than any I could expect in England, and I saw no reason to prevent my accepting permanent employment in the service of the Emperor of China, as many of my comrades had done. One old friend had received the lucrative appointment of superintendent of the Shanghai arsenal, where cannon, rifles, and ammunition were manufactured upon a large scale after European models, and to him I applied for a post, and shortly afterwards received that of an assistant superintendent.

Health and position attained once more, there seemed nothing to hinder marriage with my beloved. Loo A-Lee except legal difficulties, for marriages between British and Chinese subjects have not been provided for by the laws of either country. I consulted the consul, who said that a native wife could not secure the privileges of an English one, and that any children from such a union would be debarred from the hereditary rights of property. The missionaries, however, were of opinion that we could be married legitimately according to the ecclesiastical law, and this satisfied us, even though our privileges were curtailed. So we were quietly united, by a worthy missionary, according to the rights and ceremonies of my own church.

Meng-kee, my father-in-law, had some time before this entered our consul's service as interpreter and Chinese writer, and though he had done so under an assumed name, and was conscious that there was no probability of his being identified as the Mandarin of Peking, he frequently felt nervous and apprehensive of evil when brought into contact with his own countrymen. After the rebellion was fairly

crushed, the Government displayed leniency towards those who gave in their allegiance, by pardoning them, and even by bestowing offices upon the most deserving. When Meng-kee learnt this he sent in a petition setting forth his services in the cause of order whilst accompanying the allied army, and praying for some post in the province where he dwelt. The result of this application was an appointment in the department to which I had been promoted, and shortly afterwards, when the arsenal was removed to Nanking, we all shifted our quarters to that city, and have remained there ever since. The head of the department showed himself so zealous in his duties that the Emperor conferred upon him the rank of a mandarin of the third order, and at the same time I received a title of the fourth grade. So Loo A-Lee has now a mandarin for a husband as well as a mandarin parent, and we expect that our son and heir will receive in course of time similar honours to those which have been bestowed upon his father and grandfather by his own merits; for titles are not hereditary in China among the mandarins.



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